St. THOMAS AQUINAS

SUMMER SCHOOL OF CATHOLIC STUDIES

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ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

(From a painting in the possession of the Master General of the Dominican Order at Rome).

St. THOMAS AQUINAS

Papers from the Summer School of Catholic Studies held at Cambridge, August 4—9, 1924

Edited by

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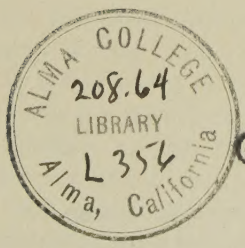

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PREFACE.

'WHOSOEVER would be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith.' Thus opens the so-called Athanasian Creed, the dogmatic authority of which is undisputed in the Church. The first business of the scientific theologian, therefore, is to know what *is* of faith, and the proof that it is so, which must ultimately be found in Holy Scripture and the infallible teaching of Church and Pope. To establish in this scientific way articles of faith, to interpret the documents of Scripture and Tradition, to observe their certain and probable implications; all this falls in the main within the province of positive theology, the sure foundation upon which alone scholastic speculation can be built. 'Now this is above all desirable and necessary,' wrote Pope Leo XIII in the encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, 'that the employment of this same divine Scripture should influence the whole study of theology, and be almost its soul; such was the view of the matter taken in every age by the Fathers and all the most brilliant theologians, and they carried it into effect.' No less evident is it that full regard and deference must be paid by the Catholic theologian to the dogmatic decisions of ecclesiastical authority.

But it is not only in the theological domain that the truths of faith have their implications; they also presuppose much that can also be known by the light of reason, such as —to take obvious examples—the existence

of God, the immortality of the soul, the possibility of knowledge itself. Faith directs the mind to a philosophy which none the less must find its ultimate proof in the working of reason alone; a philosophy which in the logical order is the prerequisite to that belief which in practice so often anticipates it. Without such philosophy, the Faith is not scientifically secure; with it, the Faith is assimilated, explained, developed. To refuse thus to apply reason to revelation is a devastating error of our own time; either the revelation of God is merely scorned, or it is degraded to minister to 'values,' to so-called religious cravings little raised above the instinct of beasts, blind guides to the blind. And reason refusing to function where faith would lead, is itself reduced to atrophy; the 'free' thinking of our own time is in large measure a refusal, even an induced incapacity, to think at all.

For so desperate a disease St. Thomas Aquinas provides the strong tonic of fearless intellectual effort. It is an agreed point that his supreme service to truth lies rather in philosophy and the philosophic assimilation of the revealed, at the foundations of human knowledge, dug deep in natural reasoning. In this regard it is instructive to notice the large space devoted to philosophy at the *Settimana Tomistica* recently held in Rome itself [1], an example largely followed in the present lectures. Revealed doctrine itself is set forth in the definitions of later councils, especially that of Trent, and in the decrees of the Holy See, in fuller and of course more decisive form. But it was the merit of St. Thomas to fit Catholic faith as a whole into human

[1] Cf. *Acta Hebdomadae Thomisticae*, Romae celebratae, 19–25 Novembris, 1924.

thought, so that even the mystery might be more accurately formulated and thereby better appreciated. His aim, in fact, was a vast generalization, resembling in a measure that of Aristotle, relying indeed upon him for much that appertains to merely human knowledge, but adding to the survey the vast field of divine revelation.

Like that of Aristotle, this great summarizing of human thought was subject to omissions and limitations, and did not prove at once the starting-point for fresh investigation and research; in both cases, perhaps, the generalization and systematization was at once too overwhelming and too highly esteemed. Roger Bacon, himself not without his limitations, proved to some extent a prophet crying in the wilderness. It needed another Bacon to establish the experimental method which he desiderated. About that time the Jewish grammarians were at their best; another Jerome did not arise to learn from them. Greek was not to begin to take its proper place in ecclesiastical studies till the fall of Constantinople. The Latin Vulgate, the corruption of which Roger deplored, still awaits an adequate revision. Nevertheless, upon the materials given, so penetrating and comprehensive was the work of St. Thomas, that even the specialist of to-day will find in his *Summa* another shield of Ajax, whence to sally, whither to return. The truth of this the lectures that follow testify.

It was in clear accordance with the wishes of the Holy Father for the celebration of the sixth centenary of the canonization of St. Thomas that the subject for the Summer School of 1924 was chosen, and the work was honoured with his special blessing. Upon the receipt

of the books already published in this Summer School series His Holiness had already sent through His Eminence the Cardinal Secretary of State a most encouraging answer, printed in this book as an appendix. The meeting in itself was once more an advance upon its predecessors, and the School stands all the more firmly established. The subject chosen for next year is the Incarnation, and the Person of Our Blessed Lord will be carefully studied in the light of Scripture and Tradition, and with an eye to the needs of our own time. The general scheme has already received much hearty approval. The lecturers will be prepared to give informal classes to those who desire fuller information or help. A correspondence school has also been started in connexion with the Summer School, taking at the outset as its subject-matter the lecture-books already published. Enquiries may be addressed to the Rev. C. M. Davidson, D.D., The Presbytery, Aldeburgh, who is the responsible secretary for this department of the work. To his zeal and ability the School itself already owes much of its success.

It remains only to thank briefly the lecturers who have contributed to School and book valuable prolegomena for the study of St. Thomas' doctrine. It has been a great privilege to begin and end the list with scholars of episcopal rank, well known for their solid learning. The Father Provincial of the Dominicans has in every way shown kindly interest in the School, even bringing thither one who has devoted his life to skilful labour upon the Leonine edition. Dr. Downey, Dr. Aveling and Fr. Sharpe are fellow-workers of tried and esteemed quality. Dr. Cronin, we may hope, brings promise of the revival of an ancient glory, of light and leading from

a land restored in peace to itself. Mr. Bullough developes with especial authority a theme which is all too new. It has been difficult to confine contributions of such weight within the necessary limits, and the Editor must offer his thanks not merely for what is here printed, but for gracious forbearance and compliance in regard of suggested compression.

C. L.

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I.

THE STUDY OF THE SUMMA THEOLOGICA.

By the Rt. Rev. H. L. Janssens, O.S.B.,

Titular Bishop of Bethsaida.

When invited to open proceedings at this Summer School with a lecture upon the *Summa Theologica* of the Angelic Doctor, my first impulse was to leave this honour to a son of St. Dominic. But I was reassured by the memory of the intimate bond which unites the Benedictine and the Dominican families, ever since the time that this child of genius, when hardly five years old, was confided to the monks of Monte Cassino. After all, what else is this marvellous *Summa* but a masterly development of the question which the little Thomas already took pleasure in putting to his teachers: 'What is God?' Even as the small grain of mustard bears within itself the bush whose kindly shadow shelters the birds of heaven, even so this simple question foreshadows the fairest edifice that the genius of man has raised to revealed religion. And further, among the first teachers of the young Thomas, it is a pleasure to recall Erasmus of Monte Cassino, one of the glories of the University of Naples. His teacher's taste for letters helped to produce that purity of style which another Erasmus was later to commend in the didactic and poetic works of the great philosopher-theologian. Perhaps also the famous Benedictine gave his pupil

some leaning towards the views of Aristotle, whom he himself, departing in this from his illustrious professor, William of Paris, had been one of the first to champion.

Before coming to my subject, I am happy to be able to bring to the present audience a special blessing from His Holiness Pope Pius XI, who remembers with pleasure the kindly welcome which he received at Cambridge in times gone by; and also a greeting from the Roman Academy of St. Thomas, which applauds the holding of this School, and follows your labours with the most lively interest.

Other lecturers in the course of this week will speak to you in detail of the life of St. Thomas, and of the skill with which he uses for the exposition and defence of Christian thought the writings of the Stagirite philosopher, while carefully controlling them. Accordingly I shall not linger upon the subject, my task being only too ample as it is. Permit me, however, one short reflection. If, from the standpoint of his philosophic system, Thomas owes much to Aristotle, yet, in view of the purifying of his doctrine, Aristotle owes still more to Thomas. Was it not Pico della Mirandola who said, 'Take away Thomas, Aristotle is dumb'? M. Jacques Maritain developes the same thought with the help of a happy comparison. 'Between Aristotle seen in Aristotle,' he says, 'and Aristotle seen in St. Thomas, there is the same difference as between a city beheld in the light of torches borne by men, and the same city beheld in the rays of the morning sun.'[1] This is due to the fact that truths but dimly seen by the light of merely natural genius receive from revelation a wonderful confirmation which immensely intensifies their splendour.

[1] *Eléments de Philosophie scholastique,* Introd. génér., p. 64.

The *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas of Aquin, of which I am about to speak, is the magnificent triumph of this harmonious accord between faith and reason.

I propose to treat my subject as follows:—

After some preliminary considerations, intended, as they say, to place this masterpiece in its proper light and setting, I will set before you the plan of the *Summa*, that you may admire the beautiful ordering of the vast subject-matter. This will be the purpose of the first part of my lecture.

In the second, I shall make some effort to bring out the excellence of the *Summa* for teaching purposes. I shall give some advice upon the manner of using it, and shall conclude with some words upon the authority which it enjoys in the Catholic Church.

(1) The Summa Theologica in Itself.

When God intends to give to society, and above all to His Church, men of genius destined to enrich the intellectual and religious inheritance of mankind, he provides beforehand a certain harmony between their age and the part which He destines them to play. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle appear after the gropings of the Ionian school and of the sophists. At the time of the first great heresies, in the midst of the Pelagian troubles, we see shine forth the powerful and constructive genius of St. Augustine, justly called the Christian Plato, the prince of the patristic era.

St. Thomas, called with no less reason the Christian Aristotle, the prince of scholasticism, appears at an epoch in intellectual maturity admirably favourable to the quick ripening and full expansion of his genius; a

genius eminently calm and well-balanced, more like to that of the Stagirite.

In a career relatively short for so prodigious a literary output, the *Summa Theologica* is the culminating point. It is what we may call the swan-song of this marvellous artificer of thought.

And remark how nicely Providence disposed the circumstances that were to lead up to this masterpiece.

Trained, from 1245 to 1252, first of all at Paris and then at Cologne, in the school of Albert the Great, whose ingenious mind was applying itself to all possible problems, and directed by this teacher to Aristotle, St. Thomas had written, while still quite young, his commentary on the Book of Sentences of Peter the Lombard, and then, a little later, his *Summa contra Gentiles*. All seemed to tend to direct his genius henceforth towards the study of more special questions, or towards biblical work, for which latter his learning and his theological knowledge, no less than his piety, had admirably prepared him. Moreover, being a philosopher no less than a theologian, he was devoting with all the zeal of a pioneer a considerable portion of his time and of his genius to explaining, one might say to baptizing, Aristotle, even as long ago Augustine had done the same for Plato. Humanly speaking, there was no longer the smallest reason to expect that he would undertake a vast synthetic exposition of Christian doctrine.

It was at this time, in 1260, that Thomas was providentially summoned to Rome by Pope Urban IV. Charged by his superiors with the organizing of the *Studium* for the young religious of his order, he composed, first at Rome, and then at Paris and Naples, in

the midst of other labours, this admirable manual, if indeed one should call it by so modest a name, the *Summa Theologica*, a monument marked by finality, whose large sweep, solidity, sublimity, and clearness, have made it, and will make it to the end of time, the object of universal admiration and of one of the most precious jewels in the treasury of the Church.

In attacking this vast work, the holy doctor had at first the idea of recasting his commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. In pursuit of this plan he even wrote a first book, soon lost, which Bartholomew of Lucca declares that he had seen. Thomas did not continue to work in this sense. He felt the need of emancipating himself, and of producing a work entirely new.

Is it, as a matter of fact, entirely new? How far did the holy doctor draw his inspiration from his two previous synthetic works? In order to answer these two questions, it is imperative that we should stop for a moment both at the one and the other.

The Book of Sentences of Peter Lombard is, as it were, the term of a long series of synthetic efforts, the first of which go back to the beginnings of patristic literature. Without speaking of the catechetical labours of Clement of Alexandria, we have among the Greeks the Περὶ ἀρχῶν of Origen, the Θείων δογμάτων ἐπιτομή of Theodoret of Cyrus, and much later the Ἔνδοσις ἀκριβὴς τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως of St. John Damascene, sometimes called the Thomas Aquinas of the East. Among the Latins we have the celebrated *Enchiridion* of St. Augustine, the *De Fide ad Petrum* of Fulgentius of Ruspe, long attributed to the Bishop of Hippo, the *Sententiarum libri tres*, often called *De Summo Bono*,

of St. Isidore of Seville. Then, in the scholastic period, there are several works of Abelard, the *Introductio in Theologiam*, the *Epitome Theologiae christianae*, and the celebrated *Sic et non*, a work conceived in too sceptical a vein, yet whereof St. Thomas himself was to preserve the dominating idea. From the school of Abelard went forth four *Summa's*, of which the chief is that entitled *Sententiae Rodlandi Bononiensis Magistri*, that is to say, of Roland Bandinelli, who became Pope under the name of Alexander III. The magnificent work of Hugh of St. Victor, *De Sacramentis christianis*, and the *Summa Sententiarum* of an unknown author immediately precede the *Liber Sententiarum* of Peter Lombard, the *Summa*, as it may be called, *par excellence*, upon which more than two hundred bachelors set themselves to comment in order to obtain the degree of master. Here also are to be placed two masterly works, the *Summa aurea* of William of Paris and the *Summa theologiae* of Alexander of Hales—if indeed it be entirely his work—the *Doctor Irrefragabilis*, which latter had a great influence upon the training of St. Bonaventure.

The Book of Sentences, upon which St. Thomas began to comment while yet a bachelor, is divided into four books. The first, which treats of God, opens with the mystery of the Blessed Trinity; then the author treats of the knowledge of God, of His predestination, of His Will and of His Power. The second book, embracing the works of creation and of elevation to grace, comprises three sections: the first treats of the world and of created things; the second, of the two intellectual natures, angelic and human; the third, of free will and of divine grace, and of the virtues and vices. The third book is entirely devoted to the Redemption. The

fourth book treats of the sacraments, of the resurrection and of some of the last things. As will be seen, the plan of Peter Lombard is one of great simplicity. St. Thomas follows it step by step in his commentary. It has sometimes been said that this first great work of St. Thomas is a youthful work. If we are to consider merely the author's age, it certainly is. Might not one say as much, so far as that goes, of the whole work of Mozart? But if one considers therein the precocious maturity of his genius, it is already quite a masterpiece, with the same right to the title as that of his holy rival, the Seraphic Doctor. Hence it is chiefly from the commentary of the fourth book of Sentences that the Supplement to the *Summa Theologica* was drawn, the *Summa* itself remaining unfortunately unfinished, owing to the death of the holy doctor, which took place at the abbey of Fossa Nuova, March 5th, 1273.

And what is the plan followed by St. Thomas in his *Summa contra Gentiles?* In order to understand well this plan, one must realize before all the origin and the purpose of this admirable work. The saint, as is well known, wrote it at the request of his *confrère* St. Raymond of Pennafort, in order to render easier the task of the Spaniards who were working at the conversion of the Moors. This purpose of itself explains the character of the work. This was to be doctrinal, it is true, but with a strong leaning to apologetic. Certain critics dispute whether the *Summa contra Gentiles* is a theological, or not rather a philosophical work. The answer seems to me beyond doubt; it is both the one and the other. In the first three books, which are devoted to truths accessible to natural reason, the philosophical element predominates. Following a very simple plan,

the essentials of which we have already met with. St. Thomas treats in the first book of the existence of God and of the divine perfections. In the second book, he treats of creatures as they proceed from God: in the third, of the relation of creatures to God as their end. It is only in the fourth book that the holy doctor deals with the order of truths which transcend the natural force of reason. He explains them according to the same threefold division. 'Those things will first be treated which are above reason and are proposed for belief in regard of God Himself, such as the confession of the Trinity; secondly, those things above reason which have been done by God, such as the work of the Incarnation and what follows therefrom; thirdly, those things above reason which are awaited at the final end of men, such as the resurrection and glorification of bodies, the everlasting bliss of souls, and things connected with these.' (Book IV., chap. 1.)

The argument of the several books is developed in a way corresponding to this twofold character. In the first three, St. Thomas is reasoning as a philosopher, and confines himself to corroborating his proofs with considerations based on faith. In the last book, he proceeds in the inverse order; he argues as a theologian, and contents himself, as a philosopher, with showing that the truths taught by faith are not contrary to reason.

After what has been said, it will be easy to see how far, in his *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas has followed, and how far he has abandoned the plan which he followed in the two works whereof we have outlined the plan.

In a preface as short as it is modest, the author

declares that he intends his work 'for the instruction of beginners,' and that with this end in view he will avoid useless questions and wearisome repetitions, and endeavour, 'with confidence in divine help, to treat briefly and clearly all that appertains to sacred doctrine, so far as the subject-matter will allow.'

The whole work, as will be seen, bears a directly theological character. Before setting to work upon it, the holy doctor sets forth, in a preliminary question, the peculiar character of the sacred doctrine of theology, as distinct from that of philosophy. It is at the end of this question that St. Thomas speaks of Holy Scripture, to which he does not devote any especial treatise, any more than to the Church. At the beginning of the second question the author explains thus the scheme of his whole work:

'Because the chief purpose of this sacred doctrine is to furnish knowledge of God, and that not only as He is in Himself, but also as He is the beginning and the end of things, and especially of the rational creature . . . with a view to setting forth this doctrine, we shall first treat of God; secondly, of the movement of the rational creature to God; thirdly, of Christ, who as Man is for us the way whereby we tend to God.'

The three parts of the *Summa Theologica*, known under the name of *Prima*, *Secunda*, *Tertia* (first, second, third), are here definitely indicated. Their general arrangement offers points of resemblance alike to the Book of Sentences and to the *Summa contra Gentiles*.

I. *Pars Prima*. The First Part of the *Summa Theologica* is subdivided into three sections. The holy doctor thus signifies their connexion: 'The consideration

of God will be threefold. First, we shall consider what belongs to the Divine Essence; secondly, what belongs to the distinction of Persons; thirdly, what belongs to the proceeding of creatures from Him.' We have, therefore, in this part the three great treatises called nowadays *De Deo Uno*, *De Deo Trino*, and *De Deo Creatore* (Of God as One, Of the Holy Trinity, Of Creation).

The first treatise, *De Deo Uno* (Of God as One: qq. II.-XXVI.) is divided into three parts; the first proves the existence of God (*an sit*); the second contemplates His Essence (*quomodo sit, vel potius quomodo non sit*); the third studies His operations, that is to say, His knowledge, will and power. While studying the power of God, the holy doctor treats of predestination, a question which most modern theologians reserve for the treatise on grace.

The second treatise, *De Deo Trino* (Of the Holy Trinity: qq. XXVII.-XLIII.) is likewise divided into three parts. St. Thomas gives the reason for this in the opening words of a striking conclusion: 'Because the Divine Persons are distinguished by relations of origin, in the order of doctrine we must first consider origin or procession; secondly, the relations of origin; thirdly, the Persons.' One may therefore say that this treatise, admirable as it is in its development and logical connexion, is all contained in embryo in the first question, which treats 'of the procession of the Divine Persons,' and even in the first article, 'Whether in God (*in divinis*) there be procession.'

The third treatise, *De Deo Creatore* (Of Creation: qq. XLIV.-CXIX.) is once more subdivided into three parts. In the first part St. Thomas considers the production of creatures; in the second, their diversity; in

the third, the manner wherein God preserves and governs them.

It is at the end of the first part of this third treatise that St. Thomas, speaking of the beginning of the duration of created things, examines the possibility of a world created from eternity, a nice question upon which he puts forward a personal view which one s free not to share, but which is inspired by the great regard he has for the philosophical defence of our faith, and which he certainly defends with as much subtlety as boldness.

In the second part of this treatise (of Creation) the holy doctor, after some preliminary considerations upon the diversity of things in general, devotes to the distinction between good and evil an article of the highest importance, in which he vigorously refutes Manicheism.

The order to be followed in the rest of this treatise (of Creation) follows immediately from the subject-matter. In the first place St. Thomas treats of creatures purely spiritual, then of creatures purely corporeal, then of creatures composed of body and soul. This arrangement, when compared to that of the Book of Sentences, already indicates how much St. Thomas identifies himself with the Aristotelian standpoint as regards the composition and unity of man.

We therefore have here three treatises: the first (*De Angelis*), of the Angels; the second, of the work of the six days; the third (*De Homine*), of Man.

The treatise upon the Angels (qq. L.-LXIV.) is one of the most beautiful in the *Summa Theologica*. St. Thomas moves in the world of pure spirits with such ease, and such understanding, that he seems in some

sort to belong to it. Hence this treatise has contributed not a little to secure him the beautiful title of 'Angelic Doctor,' a title which better represents, it seems to me, the especial character of his excellence, than that other title—older though it be—of 'the common doctor' (*Doctor communis*).

Time does not permit that I should discuss the details of this treatise. The holy doctor divides it into four parts, considering the angels first of all in their own nature, that is to say, in their substance, their intellect and their will; and then in their production or creation.

In this last part, St. Thomas, when considering the creation or production of the angels according to nature and according to grace, speaks of the state of glory of the faithful angels, as well as of the fall and punishment of the rebel angels. He returns later on to the angels in the last part of the *Prima Pars*, when studying the part reserved to the ministry of the angels in the government of the world. Hence in our own treatise *De Angelis* (Of the Angels) we have brought in these later questions here (qq. CVI.-CXVI.).

The treatise devoted to the work of the six days (qq. LXV.-LXXIV.) is short, but very solid. St. Thomas treats this delicate subject with all the breadth of view with which St. Augustine had already handled it. Hence the same breadth of view is fitting to-day in interpreting this part of the *Summa*.

In the treatise of Man (qq. LXXV.-CII.) St. Thomas follows in its main outline the arrangement adopted in that upon the Angels, considering first the nature of man, and then his production or creation.

As might easily be foreseen, given on the one hand the nature of the subject, and on the other the peculiar

mentality of the author, several questions devoted to the nature of man savour rather of philosophy than directly of theology. The analysis of the human soul, first of all as in itself and then as in union with the body; of its intellectual and appetitive faculties; then of its operations in its state of union with the body and in its state of separation; this analysis, I say, is conducted with a vigour of reasoning and a delicacy of observation which give to this very beautiful treatise an interest which I am not afraid to call thrilling.

As when speaking of the production of the angels, so also when speaking of that of man, St. Thomas does not confine himself to mere nature. He describes man as elevated by grace, such as he left the hands of his Creator. But whereas in his treatise upon the Angels he speaks of the fall of the rebel angels and of the reward of the good angels, St. Thomas reserves for another place the discussion of the fall of our first parents and of original sin, and for yet another place the everlasting bliss of the just.

The *Prima Pars* of the *Summa* concludes with a treatise which one might entitle *De Deo conservante et gubernante* (Of God's conservation and providence: qq. CIII.-CXIX.). How many precious doctrines are contained in these questions! They triumphantly refute beforehand more than one false modern system concerning the divine action upon creatures.

In treating of the changes which God can work in creatures, St. Thomas speaks *ex professo* of miracles (q. CV.), while leaving himself free to return to the subject in several other places, for example, at the end of the *Secunda Secundae*, when treating of the gift.

In explaining the changes which creatures can effect

in each other, St. Thomas harks back to the division followed in the treatise upon Creation, considering first the action of pure spirits—it is here that he speaks of the ministry of the angels—then that of bodies, and finally that of man.

This rapid outline of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa* shows clearly how far the order followed by the Angelic Doctor agrees with that of Peter Lombard's Sentences, and that of the *Summa contra Gentiles*. The *Prima Pars* corresponds in some measure to the first book, and to the first two parts of the second book of the Sentences, except that the manner in which the subject-matter is distributed is rather different. It corresponds more exactly to the first two books of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, except that St. Thomas, it will be remembered, reserves for the last book of the *Summa contra Gentiles* all that regards the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

II. *Pars Secunda.* The second part of the *Summa* is so large that it is divided into two sections, the *Prima Secundae* (I.-II.) and the *Secunda Secundae* (II.-II.). One may say that it comprises before all else moral theology, while the first and third parts of the *Summa* chiefly comprise dogmatic theology. The Second Part, in fact, forms as it were a vast treatise upon the acts and means whereby man, a creature endowed with free will and as such master of his actions, directs himself towards his end.

After having devoted some preliminary questions to this last end, which constitutes the bliss or beatitude of man (I.-II. qq. I.-V.), St. Thomas studies human acts first of all in general, and this is the argument of the rest of the *Prima Secundae* (qq. VI.-CXIV.); then in

particular, and this is the argument of the *Secunda Secundae* (qq. I.-CLXXXIX.). At first sight it might seem that this Second Part occupies a disproportionate amount of the *Summa Theologica*. But a more attentive examination of the many questions treated therein, and that with wonderful system and a no less wonderful penetration, arouses an ever growing admiration. In fact, several writers have not hesitated to say that the Second Part, although the least known, is still the most typical of the whole *Summa*.

A. *Prima Secundae.* In the *Prima Secundae*, which it would take too long to analyse in detail, one can distinguish a succession of treatises, to each of which can be given a corresponding modern name.

First of all comes a treatise *De actibus humanis* (Of human acts), based upon the fact of free will. After having traced out the limits of the voluntary and involuntary, St. Thomas considers first the immediate acts of the will itself (*eliciti*), then those commanded by the will (*imperati*). Finally he analyses the goodness or badness of human actions.

Next comes a treatise which one might call *De passionibus humanis* (Of human passions: qq. XXII.-XLVIII.). The holy doctor distinguishes the passions appertaining to desire (*concupiscibilis*) and to anger (*irascibilis*). The first are love, to which is opposed hate: desire and delight, to which latter is opposed sadness. The holy doctor is pleased to pause for a longer space over this latter, in order to study its nature, cause, effects, remedies, and moral aspect.

The passions appertaining to anger (*irascibilis*) are

hope, with its contrary, despair; fear and its opposite, boldness: and lastly anger.

There follows a long treatise which one may entitle *De virtutibus et vitiis in genere* (Of virtues and vices in general: qq. XLIX.-LXXXIX.), to which St. Thomas prefixes some general questions upon habits (*habitus*). In the portion which treats of virtues we already meet with the distinction between theological and cardinal virtues which, as we shall soon see, furnishes an important division in the *Secunda Secundae*. This portion concludes with three very beautiful questions devoted to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, to the beatitudes, and to the fruits of the Holy Ghost. In the portion which treats of vices, St. Thomas studies, as one of the causes of sin on the part of man, transmission by way of origin. Hence it is that in this treatise upon vices in general we meet with a treatise upon *original sin* (qq. LXXXI.-LXXXIII.). In three very solid questions St. Thomas considers original sin in the manner of its transmission, in its essence, and in its subject, the soul.

Thus far the holy doctor has analysed the intrinsic principles or sources of human acts. In the following part of the *Prima Secundae* he studies the extrinsic principles. These principles are law, by which God moves us towards the good, and grace, by which He comes to our aid. Hence, in the first place, a treatise *De Legibus* (Of Laws: qq. XC.-CVIII.). In this very remarkable treatise St. Thomas speaks first of laws in general; then he passes in review the various kinds of law, to wit, the eternal law, the natural law, human law and the divine law, the last-named comprising the Old Law and the New. This enumeration suffices to give one a glimpse of the riches of doctrine contained in this

treatise. The questions devoted to the Old Testament, to its moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws, are of the highest interest and of the greatest dogmatic importance.

The treatise upon *Grace*, with which the *Prima Secundae* concludes (qq. CIX.-CXIV.) is relatively short, if compared to the bulk which it assumes in the greater number of modern works of theology; but in these few questions the holy doctor has condensed a doctrine as fertile as it is solid.

The treatise is divided into three sections: in the first St. Thomas speaks of God's grace; in the second, of its causes; in the last, of its effects. The first section embraces three sub-divisions, dealing with the necessity of grace, its essence and its divisions. It will be noticed that among these last does not figure the division, become so vital to-day, as it seems, between effective grace and sufficient grace. In the third section St. Thomas speaks at length of justification, as an effect of grace operating, and of merit, as an effect of grace co-operating.

Thus ends the *Prima Secundae.*

B. *Secunda Secundae.* The *Secunda Secundae*, which is considerably longer, is divided into two great sections. In the first, St. Thomas speaks of the virtues and vices as concerning all men, to whatever condition or state they belong; in the second he studies them in their relation to particular states of life.

The first section is itself divided into two portions, the one consecrated to the theological virtues, the other to the cardinal virtues, around which the holy doctor groups the other virtues and the opposed vices, and also

the gifts of the Holy Spirit which correspond to them, as well as the divine precepts referring to them.

The treatise *De virtutibus theologalibus* (Of the theological virtues: qq. I.-XLVI.) is of the highest importance on account of the excellence of these three virtues, faith, hope, and charity. To faith answer the gifts of understanding and of knowledge; to hope answers the gift of fear; to charity, the gift of wisdom. The vices opposed to faith are infidelity, heresy, apostacy, blasphemy, the sin against the Holy Ghost. To the gift of knowledge is opposed ignorance; to the gift of understanding, blindness of mind, and bluntness of sense. The vices opposed to hope are despair and presumption. Those opposed to charity are hate, laziness, envy, discord, quarrels, schism, war, strife, sedition, scandal; the opposite of wisdom is folly.

In the treatise *De virtutibus cardinalibus* (Of the cardinal virtues: qq. XLVII.-CLXX.) the holy doctor follows the same plan. To prudence answers the gift of counsel; to justice, that of piety; to fortitude, that of the same name. Since faith has two gifts answering to it, there is none left for temperance. The vices contrary to prudence are imprudence, negligence, and the false prudence of the flesh. It would take too long to analyse the numerous questions which St. Thomas devotes to the virtue of justice. This virtue gives him occasion to write a veritable treatise *de Religione* (Of religion), of a rare beauty. Very beautiful also is the way in which the holy doctor speaks of fortitude, and the four connected virtues: magnanimity, magnificence, patience and perseverance, as well as of the vices opposed to them. The virtue of temperance gives him occasion to write a small but very important treatise on *Chastity*.

The analysis of all the aspects of temperance and of the corresponding vices is very rich in instruction.

This first section is reckoned among the most beautiful portions of the *Summa*. No theologian, no philosopher, has treated of the virtues and of the vices in a manner so complete, at once so solid and so ingenious, as the Angelic Doctor. An attempt has sometimes been made to lessen the merit of St. Thomas by saying that this portion of his work owed much to the *Summa Virtutum* (Summary of virtues) of Alexander of Hales. How little foundation there is for this contention may be judged from the fact that the very existence of such a work is uncertain.

The second section of the *Secunda Secundae* (qq. CLXXI.-CLXXXIX.) presents a totally different character. The holy doctor speaks therein of the virtues and vices corresponding to particular states of life, and that from three points of view: that of particular gifts; that of the various kinds of life, active or contemplative; and finally that of various offices or states. Among these particular gifts he treats of prophecy, of ecstasy, of the gift of tongues and of miracles. The analysis of the two lives, active and contemplative, and the comparison between them, gives him the opportunity of dealing with mystical subjects of the highest interest. Finally, when speaking of the different states, he devotes to the excellence of the state of perfection a series of questions which one might very well entitle *Tractatus de vita religiosa* (a treatise upon religious life). Thus finishes the *Pars secunda.*

III. *Pars Tertia.* Let us hearken to St. Thomas himself, introducing us to the Third Part of the *Summa*:

'Whereas Our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, when saving his people, as the angel testified, from their sins, showed to us the way of truth in His own self, whereby we may come by resurrection to the bliss of immortal life; it is necessary in order to the completion of the whole task of theology, that after the consideration of the last end of human life, and of the virtues and vices, our consideration should thereupon turn to the Saviour of all Himself, and to the benefits which He has conferred upon the human race. Wherein comes first the consideration of the Saviour Himself; secondly, of His sacraments, whereby we attain salvation; thirdly, of the end of immortal life, to which through Him we come by resurrection.'

The third part of the *Summa*, then, comprises three great treatises: *De Verbo Incarnato* (Of the Incarnation), *De Sacramentis* (Of the Sacraments), and *De Novissimis* (Of the Last Things). It is evident that the Third Part corresponds to the two last books of the Sentences, and to almost the whole of the last book of the *Summa contra Gentiles*.

The holy doctor, alas, was not able to finish his vast work. He did not even come to the end of the treatise on the sacraments. The last question written by his hand has for title *De partibus poenitentiae in generali* (of the parts of the sacrament of penance in general: q. XC.). It was chiefly his disciple Reginald of Piperno that compiled the Supplement.

The treatise on the Incarnation is divided into two parts, which it is the custom nowadays to call *De Christologia* (Of Christ) and *De Soteriologia* (Of

Redemption). In the Christology, as when treating of the Blessed Trinity, St. Thomas brings into play the vast resources of his speculative genius; in the Soteriology he allows free play to his piety. The question in which he speaks *De Sanctificatione B. Virginis* (Of the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin) requires a correction asserting the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Mother of God.

In the part devoted to the sacraments, the treatise upon the *Holy Eucharist* (qq. LXXIII.-LXXXIII.) must be ranked among the most admirable in the *Summa*. It is a theological poem even more sublime than the Office of the Blessed Sacrament, that worthy monument of the piety and poetic talent of St. Thomas. It was after the holy doctor had written this treatise, it is believed, that he received from the mouth of the crucifix before which he was praying in the convent at Naples, this praise, superior to all other, 'Thou hast written well of me, Thomas.'

This praise can be extended to the *Summa* as a whole.

And it should be remarked that in this monumental work, which comprises more than three thousand articles. St. Thomas proceeds always in the same manner, without the slightest monotony ensuing, any more than in the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, where the same rhythm of *terzine* is continued in the three parts of the poem, from the first line of the first canto of the *Inferno*,

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita,

to the last line of the last canto of the *Paradiso*,

L'amor che muove il sole e l'altre stelle.

We shall return later to the didactic value of this

uniform structure of each article of the *Summa Theologica*. For the moment I merely point to it as an element of beauty and unity.

St. Thomas' masterpiece has often been compared to one of our gothic cathedrals, as exquisitely chiselled in their details as imposing in their majestic unity. I am glad to be able to quote here the words of my venerable friend, Monseigneur Legendre. This is how the learned professor at the *Institut Catholique* of Angers expresses himself in his excellent introduction to the *Summa Theologica*:—

'There is the same magnificent plan, the same power, the same richness of detail; columns and vaultings support and cross and part in embodiment of the general harmony. God, hidden in the recess of His sanctuary, fills the building with His majesty. Virtue and vice are depicted there, the Old Law with its figures, the New with its mysteries. Christ is the crown of all, His cross forming the pinnacle of the centuries passed and the centuries still to come, and imparting unity to all the works of God. The light of Heaven, too strong for our eyes, comes to us through windows of stained glass that soften and transform it, through the smiles of the saints and the halo of Christ risen again. Under the inspiration of grace, prayer and adoration rise to God, now better known and loved, the supreme term of our aspirations.'[1]

(2) The Study of the Summa Theologica.

The *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas, in spite of the opposition with which the master met even in his

[1] *Introduction à la Somme Théologique de S. Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 16. Paris, 1923.

lifetime, and which came in part from members of his own order who had remained faithful to the Platonic tradition—the University of Paris, and afterwards that of Oxford, were not even afraid to censure several propositions of the holy doctor—in spite of this opposition, I say, the teaching of which the *Summa Theologica* was the highest expression found more and more general acceptance, and it was not long before the gifted writer was saluted with the title *Doctor communis* (Common doctor of all), a title formally revived of late by His Holiness Pope Pius XI in his centenary encyclical *Studiorum Ducem.*

This is due to the fact that St. Thomas exhibits didactic qualities that are really eminent.

The most fundamental quality is the admirable sequence of thought presented by his teaching. Even those who do not regard as demonstrated several theses which St. Thomas affirms, and who feel a greater or less esteem, as the case may be, for his system as a whole, recognize none the less the masterly skill with which he builds his edifice—let us say his cathedral—and the art wherewith he delights to adorn it, even in its least details. It is because of this that the use of St. Thomas is the best school of reasoning.

To this first advantage must be added that of an admirable clearness of style, altogether classical, in the best acceptance of the term. I will not go so far as to say that St. Thomas created an altogether new style for himself, unknown till then. No: all the great thinkers who preceded him excelled in this supreme quality, without which in truth there can be no great writer. St. Augustine and St. Anselm are two magnificent examples of this. But how few thinkers have

had so clear a view of the truth, and have at the same time possessed so fine a literary taste! No less few are they who have attained to the perfection of clearness which is admired in the works of St. Thomas of Aquin. His style is the most eloquent confirmation of Boileau's lines:

> Ce qui se conçoit bien, s'énonce clairement,
> Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément.
>
> (Who thinketh well, doth clearly his thought propound,
> And words to utter it are easily found.)

This is why these two qualities blend together, like twin rays in a prism. Fr. Pègues, O.P., speaking of St. Thomas, says very well:

'He lives in the full light; and when he speaks or writes, he makes others see as he sees himself. When he comes to deal with a subject, everything becomes clear: nothing seems any more to be obscure. Never perhaps has there been such clearness in a human head as there was in his head. His thought, his work is truly and *par excellence* the city of the sun.'[1]

To this intuition, this clearness, the holy doctor added an erudition as vast as it was reliable; worthy disciple in this of Albert the Great, whose learning was unrivalled save by that of Roger Bacon. In running through the *Summa* of St. Thomas it is easy to see how profusely and how aptly the author draws upon Holy Scripture and the Christian literature of all the centuries, as well as upon the older and more recent profane literature. 'Of all mediaeval authors,' says M. Turmel, 'St. Thomas is the one who furnishes the most complete biblical proof of the Trinity.'[2] And elsewhere the same

[1] *Initiation Thomiste*, p. 76.
[2] *Histoire de la Théologie positive depuis l'origine jusqu'au Concile de Trente*, 2nd edn., Paris, 1904, p. 265.

author says, 'The dogma of the Incarnation, no less than that of the Trinity, owes to St. Thomas the best attestation from Scripture accorded to it in the middle ages.'[1] Without doubt—it could not be otherwise—some arguments from authority, as we shall soon point out, leave something to be desired. But on the whole St. Thomas is a sure guide to his reader over the vast field of the inspired page and of the most celebrated writings of sacred and profane authors. Among the fathers, the one whom St. Thomas cites most abundantly, and with the greatest respect, is St. Augustine, whose genius dominates the patristic era and the following centuries. Nevertheless, where St. Augustine does not appear to him to have given a satisfactory solution to the problems under examination, St. Thomas does not fear to desert him, giving thereby a noble example of sincerity and of scientific freedom.

Another classical advantage of the *Summa* of St. Thomas, provided only that it be read in Latin, is that it introduces the reader to all the ample and beautiful literature of the past. The student formed in the school of the Angelic Doctor, so far from experiencing any distaste in reading the works of his great contemporaries, will find therein an intellectual satisfaction of no mean order, while the exclusive study of later, and especially of modern writers, keeps one out of literary contact with the chief scholastics. To this is due the insistence with which the Church recommends the study of the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas in the original text. Listen to the words of Pope Pius X:

'We will, order and command that in the universities, larger academies, colleges, seminaries and institutes

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 272.

which in virtue of an apostolic indult have the power of conferring academic degrees and the doctorate in sacred theology, those who occupy chairs of sacred theology have the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas for the text of their lectures, and explain it in Latin; and that they take great pains that their hearers be very well affected towards it.'[1]

And now I propose to offer some advice regarding the manner in which the *Summa Theologica* should be employed. The first piece of advice will be this. As the language of St. Thomas, even in dealing with theological questions, is permeated with philosophical notions, it is indispensable that the student should initiate himself into these concepts and this terminology. This preliminary labour, if carried through with intelligence and method, so far from losing time, will save it.

In the second place, in order to derive all the intellectual profit which the method of the *Summa* offers, it is important that the text be read in the author's own order. After having read the title of an article, the reader should stop for a moment to reflect upon the doctrine in question. He should do the same for each objection, before reading the solution. Then, at the *Sed contra est*, it is fitting to make a pause in order to weigh, I might almost say to relish, its force. The *corpus doctrinae* must be read slowly and thoughtfully, without going further until its full demonstrative force be grasped. That done, one should read the objections

[1] In the *Motu Proprio* of Pope Pius X, *Doctoris Angelici*; cf. *Acta Ap. Sedis*, Vol. VI., p. 340; cf. the *Motu Proprio* relating to the Benedictine College of St. Anselm, *ibid.*, p. 333; and similarly p. 689.

again, one after another, with the help of the doctrine expounded in the *corpus*, and make an effort to solve the difficulty oneself, before seeing how the author solves it. Studying in this way the text of St. Thomas, one will benefit by his method, which has for its object to stimulate, not merely the curiosity, but the intellectual resource and initiative of the reader.

To this counsel must be joined another. It is necessary that the student, under guidance of a good master, should control, with all the respect due to the text of St. Thomas, the value and force of the arguments from authority which he alleges, taking account of the undeniable progress which has been made in the domain of biblical and patristic studies. St. Thomas would be the first to do it if he had to write in our own times. To refrain from doing so, owing to a misguided feeling of respect, would be in some sort to offend against the fundamental criterion which was his own guide.

From this follows another counsel. No mortal is immune from all error, who has not received this singular privilege from God. Therefore in questions which the infallible authority of the Church has decided, it is right to assent without any hesitation to the doctrine of the Church, even though a doctor of intellectual genius, be he an Augustine or a Thomas, have maintained the contrary. I even go further and say that I prefer to confess simply that one or other of them has made a mistake, or has not seen the truth, rather than perform acrobatic feats of exegesis in order to arrive at a conclusion contrary to the age-long tradition of that very body, which vindicates for itself the privilege of being the authentic interpreter of the master.

And even apart from these questions, wherein there

is no doubt of the doctrine to be held by every Catholic, it is important not to renounce all freedom of thought, for example, in questions related to the natural sciences, and always to remember that the method which St. Thomas followed in these questions was empirical. Accordingly the most genuine Thomist, it seems to me, is not he who displays the most servile attachment to the letter of the holy doctor, but he who endeavours to penetrate so far into his method and into his thought as best to divine, in regard of the questions wherein progress is evidently possible, what St. Thomas would say to-day, availing himself of the results established by science since the time in which he lived. May I be allowed to quote here what I wrote upon this subject in 1897?

'When Leo XIII imparted to philosophical studies this providential movement of return to the prince of scholasticism, he certainly rendered science an eminent service. It was the mind of the great pope that this return, in appearance retrogressive, should be the point of departure for rapid progress. It will prove so in the measure in which it restores to philosophers and to theologians the habit of rigorous and logical thought. It will fail of its purpose, if it only causes minds to settle into an authoritative mould. Yes, St. Thomas is the incomparable master, too much abandoned, to whom it was important to return. But why? Precisely because he is, with St. Augustine, the most powerful reasoner of the Christian ages; because, in contact with this genius, thought acquires a penetration, a precision, a clearness, a largeness, which no other master is capable of communicating to the same degree. Let us lean upon St. Thomas by all means; yet precisely because

St. Thomas has uttered and demonstrated the truth. Let us not forget that, in the search for this truth, he was guided by principles so excellent, so universal, that it is still following him, yes, and following him closest, to maintain, in virtue of these same principles, applied to the present condition of science and of the problems before us, conclusions at variance with those of the master. For St. Thomas, set face to face with the new data, would be the first to draw these conclusions himself, were he writing to-day.'[1]

From this there follows yet another counsel, closely connected with the preceding. Since the time of St. Thomas, new problems have presented themselves, and the need has made itself felt of giving larger development to parts of theology which St. Thomas has scarcely done more than touch. No doubt his touch is that of a master; but to-day that is no longer enough. Such a subject is Apologetics; it has an importance to-day which—one might almost say happily—it did not possess in the time of St. Thomas. It may be said to comprise the treatise *De Vera Religione* (of the true religion), proving historically Christ's divine mission; and the treatises upon the Church, the Pope, Tradition, Scripture. It is unnecessary to insist upon the need of making the study of these new problems and treatises go hand in hand with that of the *Summa*. But in so doing it will be proper to bring out to what an extent St. Thomas has laid down the principles which are the basis of Catholic defence against even the most modern errors. The great Pope Leo XIII loudly proclaimed this: 'This is also a great merit, that his doctrine, since

[1] *Catholicisme et progrès*, an article in the *Revue Bénédictine*, XIVe année, Oct. 1897, p. 463.

it is built up and established upon principles of the widest application, is suited to the necessities, not of one age merely, but of all; and is very well adapted to crush the errors which are perpetually reappearing.'[1] And Benedict XV said in his turn: 'It is evident that the modernists, as they are called, have wandered so far from the Faith into so many various opinions, because they have neglected the principles and method of St. Thomas.'[2]

Yet a last word of advice. I was saying that one great advantage of the study of the *Summa Theologica* is that it furnishes an introduction to patristic and scholastic literature. That is to say, one must not isolate St. Thomas, however magnificent he be. Without speaking of St. Augustine, to whom the Angelic Doctor refers on every page, and whom it is important to consult as often as ever one can, since contact with his powerful genius is eminently illuminating and enkindling, I shall content myself with recommending two illustrious thinkers whom it would be a great mistake to neglect, namely, St. Anselm, the glory of the Benedictine family, and St. Bonaventure, no less a glory for that of St. Francis.

The worth of the former is proclaimed by Père Bainvel, S.J., in the following terms:

'Anselm has his place in the history of Catholic dogma by the side of St. Augustine and of St. Thomas. He has not to fill the *rôle* of St. Augustine, as the representative of the Catholic doctrine, nor has he, like St. Thomas, disciples without number who claim

[1] From the Encylical *Aeterni Patris*.

[2] From the letter *Sanctum et salutare* in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Vol. 8 (1916), p. 174.

descent from him. But if we regard merely the internal development of Christian theology, one hardly dares to say that personally he has accomplished less. His light unites itself to that of the other two luminous columns to illumine, not merely the interval which separates them, but also the paths of the theology to come. He is the first philosopher-theologian; the first to push forward with method and logic what his master Augustine had merely outlined, the systematic application of reason to dogma. He is therefore the father of scholasticism.'[1]

And does the Seraphic Doctor need our eulogy? Had he written nothing but the *Breviloquium*, that would be enough to rank him with St. Thomas among the most powerful thinkers of ecclesiastical literature. One may apply to them the common meed of praise which Dante bestows upon their holy founders:

> L'un fu tutto serafico in ardore,
> L'altro per sapienza in terra fue
> Di cherubica luce un splendore.[2]
>
> The one was all seraphic in his fire;
> The other by his wisdom on the earth
> Showed forth the splendid light of cherub choir.

Hence Leo XIII, never to be forgotten as the initiator of the official Thomist revival, recommends earnestly the study of the works of St. Bonaventure: 'There can be no doubt at all that those Catholic youths, more especially, who are growing up to be the hope of the Church, and are betaking themselves to the pursuit of philosophical and theological studies according to the doctrine of Aquinas, will derive the greatest profit

[1] *Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique*, ed. Vacant et Mangenot; art. *Anselme*, Vol. II., p. 1347.

[2] *Paradiso* XI. 37–39.

from a perusal of the works of St. Bonaventure.'[1] Indeed, St. Thomas, who held his illustrious friend in the highest esteem, would be the first to give us this wise counsel. In truth, the writings of the Seraphic Doctor breathe a mystic perfume of altogether heavenly sweetness. It is this wonderful blending of knowledge with piety that made the celebrated Gerson say: 'If it be asked of me, who among the celebrated doctors appears to be the more useful, I answer without prejudice, Bonaventure, because in his teaching he is solid and safe, pious, just and devout.'[2] Let us, then, cultivate both the one and the other, since the great pope Sixtus V united them in the same praise, calling them 'the two olive-trees, and the two lamps (Apoc. xi. 4) shining in the house of God, which by the richness of their charity and the light of their knowledge illumine the whole Church,'[3] a magnificent eulogy repeated by Leo XIII himself, in the document which I have just quoted.

I thus come to touch upon the altogether unique authority which St. Thomas, and in particular the *Summa Theologica*, enjoys in the Catholic Church. The sovereign pontiffs in sounding his praises in their decrees have gone so far that the learned and pious Cardinal Billot has not been afraid to say, 'It is Peter from whom Aquinas holds this unique authority.'[4] Since the decree of canonization of St. Thomas,

[1] From the letter *Quod universa*, in the *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, Vol. XVIII. (1885), p. 308.

[2] Gersonis Doctoris, Cancellarii Parisiensis, opera: Paris, 1606, Vol. 2, col. 535–6.

[3] In the bull *Triumphantis Hierusalem*, 1587 A.D.

[4] In his inaugural discourse at the Roman Academy of St. Thomas.

promulgated by John XXII on July 18, 1323, many popes, among whom are Clement VI, Urban V, Nicolas V, Pius IV, Sixtus V, St. Pius V, Clement VIII, Paul V, Alexander VII, Innocent XII, and Benedict XIV, have celebrated the excellence of St. Thomas' doctrine. Towards the end of the last century Leo XIII, in his admirable encylical *Aeterni Patris*, gave the signal for the return to the Angelic Doctor. In several other documents the same pontiff insisted upon this scholastic revival. His successors, Pius X and Benedict XV, followed in his footsteps, and Pius XI, now gloriously reigning, has given this movement a solemn consecration by the encyclical *Studiorum Ducem*, published upon the occasion of the sixth centenary of the canonization of this holy doctor.

And besides, as Leo XIII has pointed out in the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* just referred to, not only the sovereign pontiffs, but the whole Church, at the Council of Trent and in other councils, has rendered the Angelic Doctor solemn homage: 'But this is the greatest praise rendered to Thomas, and peculiar to him, in which none of the Catholic doctors have had a share, that the Tridentine fathers desired that in the midst of the very hall used for transacting business, together with the volumes of the divine Scripture and the decrees of the sovereign pontiffs, the *Summa* of St. Thomas should lie upon the altar, whence counsel, reasons, oracles, might be sought.' And Pius X expresses the same thought in these terms: 'Since the blessed death of the holy doctor, no council has been held by the Church, in which he has not taken part with his stores of doctrine.'[1]

[1] From the *Doctoris Angelici*, already cited.

Let us enter generously into this sentiment of the Church. Let us enter therein in the very spirit of the Church. Let us never forget that if she alone can give to an author so great an authority, she alone also is the authorized interpreter of her own counsels. Let us preserve, out of respect for herself and for the truth, that large spirit which Holy Church has never wished to stifle, and which the learned Cardinal Ehrle was lately inculcating at Rome itself, under the eyes, so to speak, of the Vatican. Let us give its full value to the declaration made by Pius XI in the encyclical *Studiorum Ducem*, mentioned a moment ago: 'Let them not (*i.e.*, Catholic professors of philosophy and theology) on that account exact anything more from each other, than what the Church, the mistress and mother of all, exacts from all; for in regard of those matters, about which contrary opinions are wont to be defended in the Catholic schools among authors of better standing, no one is to be prevented from following that opinion which seems to him more probable.'

My final wish is to see you all devoted to the *Summa Theologica*. If it appear to you a little severe, I say to you with the angel of the Apocalypse, 'Take the book and eat it up . . . in thy mouth it will be sweet as honey.' (Apoc. x. 9). But the sweetness will remain in the soul, and even continue to increase.

II.

THE AUTOGRAPH OF ST. THOMAS.

By the Rev. Peter Paul Mackey, O.P., S.T.M.

(1) Introduction: The Leonine Edition.

The remote origin of the Leonine edition of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas is to be found in the acts of St. Pius V (1566–1572). In his care for the preservation of the purity of the faith, he attached the greatest importance to the doctrine of St. Thomas; he not only raised him to the rank of Doctor of the Church, but collected and published his works, in an edition which is known as the *Editio Piana*. This was the first collection of his entire writings, and has been the basis of all succeeding editions.

This example was followed by Pope Leo XIII. In the very beginning of his pontificate, he proposed the doctrine of St. Thomas as the rule of Catholic philosophical truth. On the feast of St. Dominic, Aug. 4, 1879, he published the celebrated Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*. Shortly afterwards he declared St. Thomas Patron of Catholic Schools, and by the *proprius motus* of Jan. 18, 1880, he decreed the integral publication of his works: *ut longe lateque fluat Angelici Doctoris excellens sapientia.*

The execution of his design was entrusted to a Committee of three cardinals, the Prefect of the

Propaganda, the President of the Congregation of Studies, and Cardinal Thomas Zigliara, *vir ad disciplinam S. Thomae apprime institutus atque eruditus.* The edition was to be perfect in outward form, and in critical excellence fit to rank, according to the standard of the present day, with the best publications of a similar nature. On the death of the last survivor of the Cardinal commissioners in 1893, the continuation of the edition was committed to the Master General of the Order of St. Dominic.

The necessary time having been given to preparation and experiment, the work was duly commenced, and the first volume appeared in the summer of 1882. It contained the Commentaries on some of the logical works of Aristotle, and was followed by a second and third volume with St. Thomas's commentaries on the general physics and the cosmological treatises of the same philosopher. These were succeeded, between 1888 and 1906, by nine volumes containing the *Summa Theologica* with the Commentary of Cardinal Cajetan. The thirteenth volume, comprising the first two books of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, with the Commentary of Francis de Sylvestris Ferrariensis, was published in 1918. The fourteenth volume is now ready, but awaiting the completion of the preface.

In point of exterior form the edition thoroughly corresponds to the intention of the Pope: the best type and paper have been used, and the utmost attention has been given to the correctness and elegance of the printing. The primary duty of the editors was of course to secure the accuracy of the text. This has been done by the collation of a large number of manuscripts ranging from the close of the 13th century to the latter

part of the 15th; while a complete *apparatus criticus* has been provided, enabling the student to form his own judgment of the value of the readings adopted. To the same quality of accuracy belong the verification of the quotations introduced by St. Thomas, and the indication of their sources. Great attention has been given to the utility of the student, which has been consulted by many forms of editorial assistance, such, for instance, as the fitting distribution of the matter, the careful arrangement of paragraphs, and the addition of cross-references. Prefaces to the various volumes give the necessary bibliographical and palaeographical information, and set forth the criteria that have been the guide in the recension of the text.

The Commentaries printed with the text, those of Cardinal Cajetan and 'Ferrariensis,' are amongst the most esteemed that have ever been produced, and were inserted by the express command of Pope Leo, who followed in this, as in the rest, the example of the edition of St. Pius V. In the first volume is included a Commentary from the pen of Cardinal Zigliara, but, with this exception, the editors have abstained from formal Commentary, which would have prolonged indefinitely the completion of the work. In many respects, however, their editorial work may be looked upon as a *virtual commentary*.

A special feature of the 13th and 14th volumes is the reproduction of the very autograph of a large portion of the *Summa contra Gentiles*. This is a matter of high interest and great importance. A detailed account of it forms the second and main portion of this paper.

(2) The Vatican Autograph.

Introduction.—It is of course easily understood that real authenticity rests ultimately on the handwriting or the dictation of St. Thomas, but unfortunately his autographs are very few. We are fortunate, however, in possessing the original of a large portion of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the reproduction of which is the special prerogative of the Leonine Edition. It would be a mistake to suppose that this renders more easy the task of the editors. The contrary will appear with evidence from what is now to be said.

Description.—The autograph in question, when it reached the Vatican, was a bundle of 57 sheets of parchment, arranged in quires, and sewn on to an older sheet, which served as a cover, and seems to have belonged to a discarded choral book. Each sheet is doubled to form four pages, which are thus 228 of text in all, and there are two columns on each page. It contains about one third of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, and fragments of the Commentaries on Isaias and Boetius. The material is waste sheets of parchment, never good, often very bad, in many places torn or perforated. The ink is very good, though brownish.

It is not a fair copy, but the first draft revised and corrected by the writer, and destined to be handed to a transcriber, to prepare a copy for publication. The script is rapid, but careful and good; so unfamiliar, however, at the present day, that it is usually looked upon as illegible. Certain portions are written in other characters, of elegant Gothic form, which St. Thomas made use of when his object was to comprise much in a small space. Abbreviations are used throughout.

The multitude of corrections and alterations is indescribable. Slips are corrected, corrections themselves are corrected, deletions are deleted, alterations and additions are frequent and notable, and are themselves subject to alteration. The lines by which for the most part cancelling is indicated, spread a network over the page. A passage is sometimes reformed even to the fifth time. Important transpositions also occur. The whole has the appearance of a labyrinth, to which at first sight there seems no guide. Two heliographic facsimiles are to be found in the 13th volume, and a few lantern-slides have been prepared to illustrate this discourse.

History.—The manuscript has a chequered history. Till the year 1354 it remained with the Dominicans at Naples, and it was while it was with them that the sheets were attached to their cover. Already it was regarded as illegible to the ordinary reader; so testifies a contemporary annotation on one of the sheets: *procuretur si posset inveniri aliquis qui sciret legere istam litteram.*

In the year above mentioned it was carried to Bergamo, and there remained in the Dominican convent till the troubles following on the French Revolution. There exists with it the precept of the General of the Order, under date of Sept. 10, 1490, forbidding all further mutilation, which seems to indicate that portions had been distributed as relics. On the suppression of the convent, it was saved by Fra Riccardo, on whose death three nephews divided it into three parts, which they afterwards reunited, pawned and finally sold in 1819 to Antonio Fantonio, on whose death in 1874 or 1875 his heirs offered it for sale. The bishop, clergy and faithful of Bergamo united to purchase it, and at the

end of the year 1876 presented it to Pius IX, who placed it in the Vatican Library, whence its name, *Autographum Vaticanum.* There it was put in order and bound, and in its new form was committed by Pope Pius X in the beginning of 1906 to the Editors, with whom it still remains.

AUTHENTICITY.—Of the authenticity of the manuscript there is super-abundant extrinsic proof. Besides the testimony of its history, which, as we have seen, is well known, there are frequent annotations both anterior to the date of 1354, and added immediately after the transference to Bergamo. Such are: *Est de littera fratris Thomae—scriptum per manus Thomae de Aquino—a quo exemplati sunt omnes alii, quem librum ipse propriis manibus scripsit.*

But in reality no extrinsic evidence is required; it proclaims unmistakably its own authenticity. The almost inextricable mass of alterations excludes all possibility of copying or dictation; while their character is such as to make it inconceivable that the thinker and the writer should be different persons. One may apply most aptly the words of Suetonius in speaking of some autograph poems of the Emperor Nero: *ut facile appareret non translatos, aut dictante aliquo exceptos, sed plane quasi a cogitante atque generante exaratos: ita multa et deleta, et inducta, et superscripta inerant.*

WORK OF THE EDITORS.—In spite however of the inestimable value of the manuscript, the entangled condition of its text rendered it impossible to make use of it as it stood. Before all things it was needful to make a transcription in modern characters plainly legible. For this of course decipherment was necessary, and moreover the transcriber made his best endeavour to

reproduce every correction and alteration, to represent with exactness all that was cancelled, and to indicate every sign of reference employed by the author. This occupied two years. Then came the separation of what was cancelled from what St. Thomas intended to remain; and by the tracing and uniting of the scattered portions of the latter, there resulted the clear, complete and continuous text of the Angelic Doctor. And most satisfactory was it to find that this is in the main that which has been preserved by manuscript and printed tradition.

From this possession of the text, and the acquaintance with his own variations, a double advantage was secured. Not only was absolute accuracy ensured for a large part of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, but a criterion was established by which to judge of the various readings of the portion not represented by the autograph.

Not only this; but though the deleted passages cannot with propriety be called *authentic*, since they were cancelled by their author, yet they are his genuine work, and are often of the greatest interest. In order then that the student should not be deprived of them, they have been collected in an appendix, in which, by means of varied type and conventional signs, is shewn the entire Vatican text from its first form to its definite settlement.

St. Thomas in the Autograph.—The value however of the autograph does not end with its scientific utility. Coming as it does directly from the hand and mind of St. Thomas, it has an interest of a higher order; it offers us a manifestation of the method, the character and the mind of its Angelic Author.

The Method of St. Thomas.—The first composition

is of perfect simplicity, a straightforward presentation of the subject in hand, with regular division into chapters, each of which is generally preceded by its title. The elaboration, however, of this first draft is of extreme complexity. Alteration is pushed to the fourth, sometimes even to the fifth time. At times it is merely the correction of a slip of the pen; but in other cases it is due to a general movement from good to better, from clear to more clear, from more diffuse to more concise. There occur also notable transpositions for rendering more logical the distribution of the matter, and in some cases the alteration amounts to a real re-writing of the passage in question.

For effecting these changes, St. Thomas contented himself with the page actually under his hand. Space was found for corrections and additions within the lines, between the lines, in the lateral, superior and inferior margins; and when all was insufficient he sometimes had recourse to the vacant spaces of a neighbouring folio. Moreover he kept by him a smaller quire of parchment on which to write another portion of his alterations, indicating this supplement by the name of *quaternus parvus*.

All this necessitated an elaborate system of reference for the guidance of his transcriber. For the greater part use is made of conventional signs, a cross for instance, or some such thing, indicating the place of the addition, and repeated at the commencement of the word or passage to be inserted. But not unfrequently the direction is given in writing: *Quaere ad hoc signum—Quaere retro—Quaere in parvo quaterno*, etc.

An interesting feature is his manner of changing or re-cutting his pen. A trial of it is made by a few letters

inscribed on the margin, the words chosen being, as by predilection, *Ave* or *Ave Maria.*

Character of St. Thomas.—Through the work, too, we obtain glimpses of the character of the author. From the time of his canonization was observed the spirit of religious poverty which is shewn in the material of which he made use, the poorest parchment that could be found. It is remarked by two of the witnesses in the canonical process. The words with which he was accustomed to try his pen remind us of his touching devotion. The extreme beauty of his treatment of the state of matrimony seems to indicate his special wish to wean the Mahometans, for whom especially he was writing, from their degrading doctrines. In spite of his angelic intellect, he was content to work as others do, by earnest and persevering application, with industrious patience, and with attention to every minute detail necessary for the written manifestation of his thought. His precision in this is marvellous. Through the tangled mass of deletion and addition of which we have spoken, direction is so skilfully given, that his transcriber seldom or never failed to find his way with accuracy.

Yet there is nothing superhuman in his writing. He was indeed a ready writer, but not exempt from human defect. There are mistakes due to distraction, often corrected, but not always. Besides slips of no importance, there are others which, unless corrected, would notably affect the sense. Similar inadvertences are often observed in rapid writers, whose attention is more concentrated on the meaning than on the expression: an important word is accidentally omitted, or, may be, accidentally repeated: a wrong one takes the place of a similar one: when on a single page words

of opposite meaning are frequent, one may come unconsciously from the pen instead of the other. It was in this way that, in a passage treating of the goodness of God and his removal from evil, where both words, *bonum* and *malum*, are of frequent recurrence, we find in St. Thomas's own hand that *Deus est summum malum*, though the mistake was instantly corrected.

The Mind of St. Thomas.—These defects are very trivial blemishes. Of practical effect they are absolutely void, since, even if not corrected by the writer, his real intention is evident from the context in which they occur. The deliberate variations, however, multitudinous as they are, are of supreme interest. Not only do we become acquainted with the last and perfect determination of that super-eminent intelligence, but we are actual spectators of its evolution. By means of these changes, of which the relative succession can be recognized, we can trace the process by which both thought and expression reached their perfect condition. To the editors this has been a natural concomitant of their work, but the material for a similar study is provided in the appendix mentioned above.

It cannot be denied that the labour of editing such a text is a hard one, but also it has its rich reward, not only in the acquaintance with so great a mind, but also in the mental formation which results to the attentive disciple from the consideration of the forms of thought, and the methods of expression, of a great master and a great model.

III.

ST. THOMAS AND ARISTOTLE.

By the Rev. Richard Downey, D.D.

(1) Aristotle and his Philosophy.

The glory that was Greece was waning when Aristotle first saw the light of day at Stagira in the year 384 B.C. Half a century had elapsed since the Golden Age of Pericles; Sophocles and Euripides were no more; but Athens was still the shrine of the mighty. Amongst the contemporaries of the Stagirite were Praxiteles, Demosthenes and Xenophon; and two centuries had yet to run before the tragic end of Philopœmen, 'the last of the Greeks,' and the passing of Hellas into a province of the Roman Empire.

For the life of the great philosopher we are dependent on uncritical sources. His earliest biographer, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, wrote some three hundred years after the death of Aristotle, and only a fragment of his account remains. In the main we must rely on Diogenes Laertius, an entertaining gossip-monger, who wrote some six centuries after Aristotle. Fortunately, in the fifth book of his *Lives of the Philosophers,* amongst much that is useless, he cites the *Chronicles* of Apollodorus, who wrote about four hundred years earlier, for the salient facts and dates of Aristotle's career. He has preserved for us also Aristotle's will, an illuminating document with regard to the philosopher's character,

and he gives us a catalogue of the books which Aristotle left behind him, to the number of 146.

However, he says later that Aristotle's works 'are in number nearly four hundred, the genuineness of which is undoubted.'[1] Possibly, even probably, by books Diogenes means treatises, and certainly long before the time of Diogenes many works were attributed to Aristotle which were not his. Cicero speaks of 'the incredible sweetness of his diction,'[2] and this certainly does not apply to any of the extant writings of Aristotle. In fact, his lack of literary form is so marked as to have drawn down upon him the stigma of being in this matter thoroughly un-Greek. It must be remembered, however, that our Aristotle consists chiefly of the philosopher's lecture notes, which are not only unpolished and disjointed, but, as Professor Burnet has pointed out, not unnaturally treat many important questions very briefly, whilst elaborating obscure points of lesser moment.[3] Within the last twelve months Professor Jaeger has thrown new light on many dark places in Greek philosophy, and it may well be that his *Aristoteles* will bring about a modification of generally accepted views with regard to the period of Aristotle's literary activity, and his philosophical relationship to Plato. The estimate that only about a quarter of Aristotle's writings have come down to us is probably correct; but the marvel is, not that so little, but that so much of his writings has been preserved, for the story

[1] *Diogenes Laertius : Lives of the Philosophers.* Bohn's Classical Library, p. 193.

[2] *Topica,* I, i–iii.

[3] *Aristotle,* by Professor John Burnet: A paper read at the Meeting of the British Academy, July 2nd, 1924.

of their preservation is, as we shall see in the second paper, a veritable romance in itself.

His personal history is not without glamour. In lineage, it is said, he was a direct descendant of Æsculapius, and son of the court-physician to Amyntas II, king of Macedonia. Of his childhood nothing is known to us, but at the impressionable age of seventeen he was left an orphan, the heir to no mean fortune and the master of his destinies. Because of his full purse calumniators have depicted him as leading the life of the prodigal. But he came to Athens a stripling lad with a northern accent, alien manners, and the temperament of a bookworm. The only prodigality of which there is any evidence was in purchasing books, which he eagerly devoured, so that Plato, his master, called him 'the reader.' If we are to believe Diogenes, he was something of a fop, notwithstanding his unprepossessing person. His legs, says Diogenes, were very thin, his eyes were small, and he spoke with a lisp; but he bathed in warm oil, dressed in purple and fine linen, adorned his hands with rings, and was most particular as to how he did his hair.

For twenty years, thirteen of them consecutive, he sat at the feet of Plato in the famous Academy. He has been represented as saddening the declining years of 'the old man eloquent,' by his captious criticism, and Diogenes records how Plato is supposed to have said, 'Aristotle has kicked us off just as chickens do their mother after they have been hatched.'[1] These stories probably owe their origin to his constant polemic against Plato's theory of Ideas. Throughout his works Aristotle is at pains to stress the points of disagreement

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 181.

with his former master, though as a matter of fact the points of agreement are more numerous and more fundamental, so that it has been well said that Aristotle is 'the greatest of all Platonists,'[1] in that he sought to purge and purify the idealism of Plato. Notwithstanding his constant polemic, he regarded Plato with reverence and affection. His attitude is well set forth in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where, regretting the necessity of differing from Plato, he says: 'Still perhaps it may appear better, nay, to be our duty where the safety of the truth is concerned, to upset if need be even our own theories, especially as we are lovers of wisdom: for since both are dear to us, we are bound to prefer the truth.'[2] Here, be it noted, he speaks of 'our own theories,' thereby including himself in the school of Plato.

In the year 345 B.C. Aristotle left Athens to join his friend Hermias, the governor of Atarneus, probably for the purpose of instructing him in politics. The latter, however, was assassinated, and Aristotle fled to Mitylene with Pythias, the adopted daughter of Hermias, whom later he made his wife. She predeceased him: and we find this touching reference to her in his will: 'Wherever they bury me, there I desire that they shall also place the bones of Pythias' (p. 186). He had been in Mitylene about two years when Philip of Macedon invited him to undertake the education of Alexander the Great, then a youth of fifteen. For four years Aristotle lived in the royal palace as tutor to the future conqueror, and for three more years he remained in the

[1] *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, by W. T. Stace, p. 255.

[2] *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by D. P. Chase, I, 6.

Macedonian capital. There are wonderful stories of Alexander's munificence to his guide, philosopher and friend. Pliny narrates how the royal patron of learning, in order to foster the study of animals, placed at the disposal of Aristotle several thousand men employed as gamekeepers, hunters, fishermen and fowlers throughout the royal preserves in Asia and Greece.[1]

Soon after Alexander ascended the throne, Aristotle returned to Athens. But ten years had wrought great changes. Plato was dead, and the mediocre Xenocrates had his chair, and the Academy knew Aristotle no more. He therefore opened a school of his own, known as the Lyceum. As an alien he could not acquire real estate, so he is said to have rented a building near the sacred grove of Apollo Lyceius.[2] Others say that the Lyceum was the most sumptuous of all the gymnasia at Athens, elaborately equipped with lecture-halls, baths and arenas for sport, and that Aristotle was permitted to teach, not in the building itself, but as he walked up and down its shady paths with his pupils. Tradition is unanimous that he did walk about whilst discoursing, and consequently he and his followers came to be known as the Peripatetics. For thirteen years he taught and composed his treatises, until political intriguers drove him from the city. The death of Alexander the Great in 322 B.C. was the occasion for an outburst of anti-Macedonian feeling. As the tutor and friend of Alexander, the philosopher was assailed by the over-zealous patriots, who trumped up against him a charge of impiety, on the ground that he had given divine honour to a mortal in a hymn which he had composed

[1] *Hist. Nat.* viii. 16.

[2] *Aristotle*, by W. D. Ross, M.A., p. 5.

in memory of his murdered friend Hermias. Mindful of the fate of Socrates, he fled from Athens lest, as he said, the Athenians should sin a second time against philosophy.[1] The vindictiveness of his enemies followed him to his retreat at Chalcis in Euboea. Exile though he was, they declared his life forfeit. He was beyond their reach; but Nature executed the sentence. He died within a few months of reaching Chalcis, at the age of sixty-three, in the same year as his renowned fellow-exile, Demosthenes.

It is difficult to speak in measured terms of the achievement of Aristotle. Of him we may truly say that he touched nothing which he did not adorn, and he touched well-nigh everything within the range of human knowledge. He gathered up and synthesized all that was of value in the work of his predecessors. He is at once the culminating apex of Greek philosophy and the forerunner of science. In an age of specialists we can only marvel at the sweep of his intellect. He was the best informed man of his day on every known subject of study, and he himself widened the curriculum of learning by the addition of several disciplines of which he was the originator. Rarely does Aristotle strike a personal note, but he takes a pardonable pride in having invented logic. 'Of this subject,' he says, 'there has not been a part cultivated, and a part not, before; nothing of it has existed at all, . . . about the art of syllogism we have received nothing at all from the ancients, but we have laboured for a long time by the exercise of investigation.'[2] He brings his logical

[1] Ps.-Ammonius, *Aristotelis Vita.*

[2] Organon, literally translated by Octavius Owen, Vol. 2, p. 607: *Sophistici Elenchi*, 183–184.

treatises to a close by asking the reader to excuse any omissions in his method, and at the same time 'to be very grateful for its discoveries.'[1] How well he laid the foundations may be gathered from Kant's verdict on deductive logic: 'Since Aristotle it has not had to retrace a single step . . . and to the present day has not been able to make one step in advance.'[2] His *Rhetoric* lays down principles which have never been superseded. He is a pioneer in zoology, and his work on the generation of animals displays a genius that has scarcely been equalled, much less surpassed, until comparatively recent times. In a letter to Ogle, 1882, Darwin wrote: 'From quotations I had seen I had a high notion of Aristotle's merits, but I had not the most remote notion what a wonderful man he was. Linnaeus and Cuvier have been my two gods, though in very different ways, but they were mere schoolboys to old Aristotle.'[3] He is, too, the Father of the History of Philosophy, the first book of his *Metaphysics* being devoted to a critical appraisement of the work of previous thinkers. This book must be our starting-point in studying the philosophy of Aristotle, which cannot rightly be understood apart from its historical setting.

Greek philosophy begins some six hundred years before Christ on the sunlit shores of the Aegaean sea. In its infancy it comes to Athens, 'the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence,' and there attains maturity. Already past its prime it wanders afield to Alexandria, thence to Rome, to Constantinople,

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] *Kritik, Vorrede,* p. 13.
[3] *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin* (1887), Vol. III., p. 252.

Syria and Persia; and finally, like a weary traveller, returns to the land of its birth, spent and broken, to perish amidst the classic ruins at the closing of the schools of Athens by Justinian in the sixth century after Christ. We may distinguish three great periods in the history of this philosophy. There is first of all the pre-Socratic period, when the Ionics, the Eleatics, and the Atomists looked outward on the world and grappled with the mighty problem of its origin, groping for ultimate constitutive causes. In the second period, from the Sophists to Aristotle, the Greek mind looks inward on itself, and rises from cosmology to epistemology. It soars ever higher and higher with Socrates and Plato, and reaches its zenith in Aristotle. With his death there sets in a period of decadence, the era of the Stoics, Sceptics and Neo-Platonists.

The philosophers of the first period raised the vital question of the nature of reality, and the clash of opinion is sharpest in the theories of the contemporary thinkers Parmenides and Heracleitus. The former stressed the element of permanence amidst apparently changing phenomena. In reality, he contended, change is an illusion; there is no such thing; the only reality is imperishable being which never becomes, but always is. Zeno the Eleatic developed this philosophy of the static, and undertook to show by various mathematical conundrums that time, space and motion are chimæras of the mind, delusory notions which resolve themselves into antinomies. Heracleitus, on the other hand, maintained that change is the only reality, and that permanence is an illusion. For him nothing 'is' but becoming. Everything, he contended, is in a state of flux, and the world itself is a ceaselessly renewed flame.

It was Aristotle who reconciled these conflicting views, and insisted that there is in the world both a static and a dynamic element, that in everything finite there is passivity and activity, the determinable and the determining, potency and act, matter and form. This is the pivotal point of Aristotelianism, the theory of hylomorphism, postulating static and dynamic co-principles of contingent being, which therefore, in the last analysis, is seen to be matter determined and made specific.

Still in the first period of Greek philosophy, Anaxagoras at Athens had risen to a supra-sensuous concept of ultimate reality. He was the first to conceive of mind, intelligence, *nous*, as the background of the changing world. Wherefore Aristotle says of him: 'When one man said, then, that reason was present—as in animals, so throughout nature—as the cause of the world and of all its order, he seemed like a sober man in contrast with the random talk of his predecessors.'[1] But Anaxagoras did not make mind the sole ultimate principle; he held to a dualism of mind and matter, which moves Aristotle to say: 'Anaxagoras uses reason as a *deus ex machina* for the making of the world, and when he is at a loss to tell for what cause something necessarily is, then he drags reason in, but in all other cases ascribes events to anything rather than to reason.'[2] Nevertheless Anaxagoras made it possible for Socrates to formulate his far-reaching doctrine of concepts, upon which are grounded the Ideas of Plato, the Forms or

[1] *Metaphysica* I. iii. 984: *The Works of Aristotle*, translated into English under the editorship of J. A. Smith, M.A., and W. D. Ross, M.A., Vol. VIII.

[2] *Ibid.* I. iv. 985.

Essences of Aristotle, and the Idealism of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel.

At the beginning of the second period of Greek philosophy the Sophists had radicated all knowledge in the changing phenomena of perception. This led to a philosophy of sheer subjectivism. For since sense-perception varies in individuals, what is true for one man may be false for another, and the Sophists certainly did not flinch at the conclusion that contradictory propositions may both be true. It was Socrates' mission to restore a belief in objective truth, and this he did by pointing out that reason is the stable element in man, and that consequently knowledge must be radicated in concepts and not in sense-perception. It was on this foundation that Plato built up his theory of Ideas. With Socrates the concept is something purely mental, but the Platonic Idea is a great deal more: it is a reality apart from the mind. Ideas are at the head of the whole hierarchy of concepts and concrete things. The Idea is, for Plato, the archetypal essence comprising not merely concepts, but the objective entities which give rise to concepts. In fact these objective entities are real only in so far as they are participations of the Ideas. The Ideas themselves are substances, spaceless and timeless, immutable and imperishable, universals. Ultimately, according to Aristotle, Plato identified them with the Pythagorean numbers. He even makes them the efficient causes of everything and calls them gods. Here, however, presumably he is indulging in the mythical method so beloved by him. But he certainly hypostatized them and attributed to them an existence independent of the objects of sense. Thus for Plato universals are

realities apart from mind and matter, existing in a mythical world of their own.

It is on this point that Aristotle joins issue with Plato. The latter, in Aristotle's eyes, had committed the unforgiveable sin of divorcing ideas from reality. It is here especially that Aristotle stresses the vital difference between Plato and himself. Both of them describe ideas as 'kinds' (εἴδη), universals; but Plato conceives them as something apart from sensible phenomena, Aristotle as something in these. This is due to a fundamental difference in general method. Plato distrusts the senses almost as completely as Parmenides or Zeno. The intelligent man, says Plato, ought not to occupy himself with the things of sense, but with ideas. Aristotle, on the other hand, champions the validity of the senses in their own proper sphere. Each sense reports truly,[1] and whatever error there may be arises from the subsequent judgment on the sense data. Consequently the starting-point for Aristotle is the world of sense, the things of experience, *facts*. He is the originator of the scientific method, and all its stages —observation, experiment, hypothesis, verification, and deduction—were known to him.

Bacon in the *Novum Organon* accuses Aristotle of ignoring facts and spinning theories out of his head, as a spider spins its web out of its own substance. Nothing could be further from the truth. Aristotle had a passion for facts. Thus he says: 'Lack of experience diminishes our power of taking a comprehensive view of the admitted facts. Hence those who dwell in intimate association with nature and its phenomena grow more and more able to formulate, as the foundations of their

[1] *De Anima* iii. 3; *Metaphysica* iv. 5.

theories, principles such as to admit of a wide and coherent development; while those whom devotion to abstract discussions has rendered unobservant of the facts are too ready to dogmatize on the basis of a few observations.'[1] Again, discussing the parthenogenesis of bees, he says: 'The facts, however, have not yet been sufficiently grasped; if ever they are, then credit must be given rather to observation than to theories, and to theories only if what they affirm agrees with the observed facts.'[2] Bacon in his strictures on Aristotle was guilty of the very fault which he was condemning. He had taken it for granted that the *a priori* method of the decadent Aristotelians[3] was the method of Aristotle himself. There are lapses from the scientific method even in Aristotle, but they are few and far between, considering the age in which he wrote.

He is the first to approach the study of concepts in a scientific spirit. He begins with the facts of experience. Individual substances, or 'first substances,' are the original source of concepts. There is nothing in knowledge that is not ultimately accounted for by the individual existents given in the world of realities. The universal is abstracted from individual things, and is alone the proper object of the understanding. It is abstracted by the active intellect (*νοῦς ποιητικός*) which strips the sensory image of its individualizing characteristics, and thus provides a determinant for the

[1] *De Generatione et Corruptione* I. ii. 316: *The Works of Aristotle*, as above.

[2] *De Generatione Animalium* III. x. 760.

[3] For instance, it is narrated of Cremonini (1552–1631) that he would not look through a telescope for fear of finding that Aristotle's astronomy was wrong. *History of Medieval Philosophy*, by M. De Wulf, trans. by P. Coffey, p. 472.

passive intellect (*νοῦς παθητικός*), where as in the womb of the understanding it is conceived and brought forth. Hence for Aristotle the universal exists in the mind, with a foundation in extra-mental reality. This theory has been called the Ontological Modification of Platonic Realism, since it gives to the universal an ontological reality instead of the mythical reality of Plato. It is the most consistent ideogeny yet devised, and an enduring monument to the synthetic genius of Aristotle.

The study of the individual things of sense is the constant preoccupation of Aristotle. The principles of any existent thing are for him its causes (*ἀρχαί* or *αἰτίαι*), and they are four in number: the material cause, or the stuff out of which the object is formed; the efficient cause, or the principle of movement which produces the object; the formal cause, or that which determines the matter to its specific nature; and the final cause, or the intrinsic end for which the thing is. It is to be noted that Aristotle rejected the exemplary cause of Plato as a superfluity. Of the four causes Aristotle says: 'It is possible that one object may combine all the kinds of causes. Thus, in a house, the principle of movement is the art and the workmen, the final cause is the work, the matter the earth and stones, and the plan is the form.'[1] However, all four causes need not be present in their separateness, for Aristotle recognized that the final cause tends to merge into the formal, and that the efficient cause also is reducible to the concept of form. The material cause alone in no sense comes under that concept. Ultimately, then, we are left with two radically opposed mental

[1] *Metaphysica* III. 2.

abstractions, primary matter and substantial form, the fundamental categories of Aristotelian philosophy. By several different routes, as it were, Aristotle leads us back to the necessary fusion of the static and the dynamic in the phenomena of experience.

It has been said that Aristotle's concept of cause is in conflict with the scientific concept which lies at the root of inductive logic. For Mill a cause is the immediate, invariable, unconditional antecedent of the consequent; and his inductive methods are so many different ways of purging the antecedent of mediacy, variability and irrelevant circumstances. Induction is concerned with the conditions of sequence in any cycle of changes, and therefore leaves out of account both final and formal causes. Partizans of Aristotle have laboured to show that Mill is wrong, whilst many moderns have dismissed Aristotle with contempt. The fact of the matter is that Aristotle and Mill are both right. Their conceptions of cause are diverse, but not contradictory. Mill prescinds altogether from the constitutive principles, or reasons, which Aristotle calls causes. So far from denying them, Mill does not even consider them; they do not come within the range of his vision. On the other hand, Aristotle recognized the scientific notion of cause, as is clear from his enumeration of *post hoc propter hoc* amongst the fallacies, and from his rudimentary treatment of inductive method in the *Topics*.

In one sense the *Logic* of Aristotle is his greatest achievement. In this field he is at once the pioneer and the master, for he had no previous findings on which to work, and throughout the centuries deductive logic has never risen above its source. The term logic is

comparatively modern, not being found before the time of Cicero. 'Analytics' is Aristotle's own name for the principal logical treatises, which at an early date were gathered together with his other logical treatises under the title *Organon*, since logic was regarded as an instrument regulative of all science rather than as a special department of science. These treatises are six in number: the *Categories*, classifying terms out of syntax; *On Interpretation*, setting forth the doctrine of propositions; the *Prior Analytics*, or exposition of the formal aspects of syllogistic reasoning; the *Posterior Analytics*, which correspond roughly with criteriology, or material logic; the *Topics*, a dissertation on the grounds of probable reasoning; and finally, the *Sophistical Refutations*, or treatise on fallacies.

It is now generally admitted that the few additions made to deductive logic since the time of Aristotle are, to say the least, doubtful improvements. There is first of all the fourth figure, said by Averroes to have been added by Galen (130–200 A.D.) to the three figures of syllogism recognized by Aristotle. Mr. Joseph says of it: 'The theory of syllogism has been much darkened by this addition.'[1] And rightly, for the fourth figure ignores the all-important denotation of terms which underlies Aristotle's designation of them as major, minor and middle. Hamilton's quantification of the predicate is a still more doubtful boon. The only other addition of any note is the working out of the rules governing conditional syllogisms. These latter were not considered by Aristotle, for the excellent reason that a conditional syllogism can always be reduced to categorical form. Two thousand years of criticism

[1] *An Introduction to Logic*, by H. W. B. Joseph, p. 235.

have wrought no substantial change in the logical doctrine of Aristotle, and there has not been a single addition by moderns which moderns have not challenged.

Bacon in his *Novum Organon* mistook the function of Aristotle's *Organon*. The Father of Modern Science in denouncing the syllogism as a means of interpreting nature is under the impression that he is correcting Aristotle, whereas it is abundantly clear that Bacon had misconceived Aristotle's doctrine of syllogism. In expounding it Aristotle himself says: 'The peculiar principles indeed in every science are many, hence it is the province of experience to deliver the principles of everything; for instance, I say that astrological experience gives the principles of astrological science, for from phenomena being sufficiently assumed, astrological demonstrations have thus been invented. So also is it in every other art and science.'[1] The *Organon*, then, was not meant to be an instrument of discovery, except in so far as it makes the implicit explicit, the confused clear, and the indistinct distinct. It is essentially an instrument for testing the validity of the reasoning which proclaims the discovery. It fulfils much the same function as the proof of a sum in arithmetic. It is generally admitted that much of Bacon's criticism of the syllogism is beside the mark, and it was left for Mill to make it clear that induction itself is concerned with establishing the minor premise of a syllogism.[2] Induction is essentially a process of elimination which derives its logical value from deduction. This was

[1] *Prior Anal.* I. xxx. 2. *Organon*, literally translated by Octavius Owen, Vol. I., p. 153.

[2] X is caused by A or B or C or D.
X is not caused by A or B or C.
Therefore X is caused by D.

clearly seen and stated by Mill: 'The instrument of Deduction alone is adequate to unravel the complexities proceeding from this source [elimination]; and the four methods [the five methods are grouped as four by Mill] have little more in their power than to supply premises for, and a verification of our deductions.'[1]

One might have thought that Aristotle would have been content to study the things of sense which so engrossed him, and have devoted himself wholly, for instance, to the science of biology, for which he had at once special predilection and special equipment, or at least have been satisfied to set forth the principles of different sciences in unrelated form. But the truth is that he possessed all the concentration without any of the narrowness of the specialist, and just as his encyclopaedic bent of mind led him to systematize all previous Greek speculation, it led him also to form a higher synthesis of all the special sciences. He could not confine himself to the study of this or that particular kind of being, say to the study of animals, or plants, or lines, or numbers, as does the zoologist, the botanist, the geometrician and the mathematician; he felt that he must address himself precisely to that elusive something in which animals, plants, lines and numbers all agree. The objects of the special sciences, the soul in psychology, the inorganic world in cosmology, the celestial bodies in astronomy, all agree in that they are being, *i.e.*, being as distinct from any particular form of being, being in so far as it is being. By being in this sense is meant simply anything which exists or may exist. Mere mental abstractions, such as genus or

[1] *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*, by John Stuart Mill, Book III. x. 3; 3rd and 4th edition, p. 289.

species, or 'entities' which are intrinsically impossible, such as square circles, do not come within the notion of being, actual or potential. Real being undoubtedly exists, and clearly this real undifferentiated being may in itself be the object of study, and the portion of Aristotle's philosophy devoted to that study of real being as such is known by the dread title of *Metaphysics*.

This designation is not of Aristotle's coining. It probably owes its origin to Andronicus of Rhodes who, in his edition of Aristotle's works, published about 50 B.C., placed this portion of Aristotle's philosophy after the treatise on *Physics* under the title τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, to indicate that this section should either stand after, or be studied after, the *Physics*. The word, however, has come to mean above or beyond physics, *i.e.*, transcending experience, and it has fallen into disrepute owing to the beautiful nonsense which has taken shelter under its supposed shadowy vagueness. Aristotle's own name for this branch of knowledge is ontology, the science of being as being, ἐπιστήμη τοῦ ὄντος ᾗ ὄντος. He also calls it first philosophy, in the sense of a governing philosophy which gives laws to all other sciences, but receives laws from none (*Metaph.* I. 2). His own description of it merits more attention than it generally receives. He says: 'If there is no being apart from the compound existences in nature, physics must be the first science. On the other hand, if there is an immutable being, that being must take precedence of the former, and the corresponding science must be the first, a universal philosophy. The office of this philosophy must be the contemplation of being as such, of its essence and its essential attributes.'[1]

[1] *Metaph.* VI. i. 28 (1026a).

For Aristotle the proper object of the mind, as we have seen, is the abstract or universal, and hence the study of being as being ranks higher in the hierarchy of sciences than the study of any particular form of being. Moreover it involves the study of the first principles, not only of being, but of knowing. In apprehending being as being, the mind is engaged with that which is most nearly akin to its own immaterial nature. In God this relationship between the knowing subject and the object known is one of absolute identity. Hence it is not astonishing to find that another of Aristotle's names for metaphysics is theology, the science of God, who for Aristotle is thought of thought, *νόησις νοήσεως*, pure being which is pure thought.

By these names, ontology, first philosophy, theology, Aristotle indicates the precise scope of this much misunderstood branch of philosophy. For him it is not the playground of idle fancy unfettered by fact; it is an exact science, the basis of which is as empirical as Herbert Spencer's 'probe of chemic test.' Here, as in his psychology, the starting-point for Aristotle is the realistic principle, *nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*—there is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses. Though he scale the empyrean of metaphysical speculation, he always has his feet on solid earth. Rising from the groundwork of experience, metaphysics is for Aristotle the science of the first principles of being and knowing, and therefore also the science of God, in whom being and knowing are an absolute unity.

The complete philosophy of Aristotle has been classified in various ways. It has been divided into speculative, practical and poetic philosophy. More

usually it had been considered under the five headings of logic, metaphysics, physics, ethics and aesthetics. Professor Ross adopts an eightfold division: logic, philosophy of nature, biology, psychology, metaphysics, ethics, politics, rhetoric, and poetics.[1] In this paper we are aiming at a bird's eye view of Aristotelianism as a whole, with a closer inspection of its main features. Of the philosophical doctrine set forth in Aristotle's logic, physics and metaphysics we have spoken. It remains to set forth briefly the theme of his ethics and aesthetics. The Stagirite forestalled Kant as the apostle of independent morality, that is to say, of a morality independent of any doctrine of a future life. Plato's transcendental basis of ethics was rejected by Aristotle, who preached a gospel of the earth earthy, yet far enough removed from modern utilitarianism. His ethical theory is the outcome of his metaphysical theory. True to the fundamental categories of his philosophy, he insists that the chief good for man consists in act as opposed to potency, *i.e.*, in the prudent exercise of all man's faculties. The chief good, says Aristotle, is 'a working of the soul in the way of excellence.'[2] Excellence is of two kinds, intellectual and moral. In treating of the latter Aristotle advocates the essentially Greek ideal of 'the mean,' that which is neither too much nor too little. Sophrosyne—temperance, moderation, balance—was the virtue which distinguished the Greeks from the Barbarians, and it has been well described as 'serenity at the core of the storm.'[3] In advocating the doctrine of 'the mean,' the course of the prudent and intelligent man, Aristotle is merely giving

[1] *Aristotle*, p. vii.
[2] *Nichomachean Ethics* I. vii. (1098a).
[3] *Greeks and Barbarians*, by J. A. K. Thomson, p. 109.

expression to the spirit of Hellas. And he was advocating no easily attainable ideal, as the aberrations of the Epicureans and Stoics testify.

Aristotle's aesthetics, or philosophy of art, is likewise the outcome of his metaphysics. Plato banished poets from his republic, but Aristotle's insistence on intrinsic teleology in all things would of itself have saved him from such philistinism. Art is defined by Aristotle as 'a state of mind, conjoined with reason, apt to make.' It is essentially productive, and is considered by Aristotle, more particularly in relation to drama, in the *Poetics*. Of this masterpiece Professor Ross says: 'If nothing of his had been left to us but this tiny fragment—on a subject, too, far removed from his main interests—we should still recognize its author as one of the greatest of analytic thinkers.'[1] As we have seen, the proper object of the understanding is the universal; and philosophy which studies the universal is at the head of the hierarchy of studies. But art, too, is primarily concerned with the universal. It does not aim at a slavish copy of nature; it idealizes nature. It seeks to realize the universal in the individual. Of photography as contrasted with portrait-painting, Aristotle probably would have said what he says of history as contrasted with poetry—it is less philosophical, and therefore less noble, because its object is the particular as such. Into his masterly analysis of the tragic and the comic we cannot enter here. With his *Poetics* as with his *Ethics* we are concerned only in so far as they bear out and illustrate his general philosophical theory.

It is customary to treat the philosophy of Aristotle, like the philosophy of Plato, as the finished product of

[1] *Aristotle*, p. 276.

his thought. But there can be little doubt that had Aristotle, like Plato, lived to the ripe age of 80, instead of being cut off at the comparatively young age of 63, his work would have received that final revision which it so manifestly needs. Professor Jaeger distinguishes three periods in the literary output of Aristotle. He does not accept the hitherto current view that Aristotle wrote only whilst teaching at the Lyceum. There are vestiges of writings of an earlier period in which Aristotle shows himself more of a Socratic than a Platonist. In the writings of the second period which we possess Aristotle is throughout a disciple of Plato, though not a Platonist in the technical sense. From the pen of the more mature Aristotle we have but little. But had another twenty years of peaceful life been granted to him, undoubtedly the ambiguities, uncertainties and apparent contradictions discernible up and down his writings, as for instance, with regard to the nature of the soul, the nature of God, and in parts of his *Physics*, would have been in great measure removed, the rough places made smooth, and possibly he himself would have indicated the precise degree of his indebtedness to Plato and his own special, perfected contribution to the heritage of the ages. Masterpiece though his philosophy undoubtedly is, we owe it to him to remember that it never received the finishing touches of the master mind.

At one time or another Aristotle has been the subject of boundless eulogy and unrestrained abuse. In his own day Theocritus of Chios, in an epigram, pillories Aristotle as 'the empty-headed,' and his philosophy is dismissed by another contemporary as 'sad chattering.'[1] The tide of vituperation reached its highest in and

[1] *Diogenes Laertius : Lives of the Philosophers* (Bohn's Classical Library), pp. 184, 185.

around the Reformation period, when Aristotle, on account of the proud position which he had occupied in the schools since the time of Aquinas, not unnaturally incurred the *odium theologicum*. Luther in his downright way said: 'If Aristotle had not been of flesh, I should not hesitate to affirm him to have been truly a devil.'[1] There are no bounds to the invective of Ramus and others of his school, whilst Nizolius, in a work purporting to expose pseudo-philosophers (1553 A.D.), was not ashamed to liken Aristotle to a cuttlefish escaping in a cloud of ink. Again, the rise of the physical sciences produced a reaction against the Stagirite, who was held responsible for 'the lumber of the schools' in days of their decadence. From being 'the master of those that know' he came to be only 'the shadow of a great name.' In our own time we have witnessed the swing of the pendulum, and once again Aristotle is at least counted among the immortals. There are obvious defects in his philosophical system, and these we shall consider in estimating the influence of the Philosopher on Aquinas. But, as Hegel reminded an age which had forgotten its indebtedness to the sage of the Lyceum, 'he penetrated the whole universe of things, and subjected its scattered wealth to intelligence; and to him the greater number of the philosophical sciences owe their origin and distinction.'[2]

(2) St. Thomas' Use of Aristotle.

As Anselm dominates the eleventh, and Abelard the twelfth, so Thomas Aquinas personifies the thirteenth century in the full meridian of its glory.

[1] Apud Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 17.
[2] *Vorlesungen über die Gesch. der Philos.*, II, 298 (1883).

Many torches contributed to the intellectual blaze of that lustrous epoch. In the first place the thirteenth century was in no small measure moulded by the crusades, of which, after producing five, it saw the end in 1270. These enterprises, and still more the earlier crusades, linked up the East with the West, and brought about an interchange of thought and learning which enlarged men's vision and quickened the spirit of enquiry. If the crusades did not liberate the holy places, they at least liberated men's minds. Moreover the constant financial drain led to the splitting up of the estates of the impoverished crusaders and the sale of their land to the Jews, and ultimately to the passing away of feudal serfdom, so that the thirteenth century ushered in a freedom of thought and action unknown to the age of Anselm or Abelard.

A still more powerful factor in the revival of learning was the foundation and consolidation of the Universities, especially at Bologna, Paris and Oxford. Dismissing as legendary the story that this historic University of Cambridge owed its origin to one Cantaber, a dashing Spanish prince who flourished in the age of chivalry, or to the sedate monks of Croyland Abbey in 1110, it would seem that the schools at Cambridge, benefiting by a migration of discontented students from Oxford in 1209,[1] shortly afterwards attained university rank. Abroad, Italy alone, during the first half of the thirteenth century, gave birth to no less than nine universities, whilst Spain, in the early decades of the same century, produced three, including the renowned Salamanca. Still in the dawn of the thirteenth century, France was dotted with schools which had as good a

[1] *History of Western Education*, by William Boyd, p. 148.

claim to rank as universities as many in Italy, and doubtless would have done so but for the towering eminence of Paris. The quest of learning was the time-spirit of the age.

A third cause of the diffusion of knowledge was the rise of the Mendicant Orders, the Dominicans, the Friars Minor, the Carmelites, and the Hermits of St. Augustine. Not only did they labour amongst the people, administering to their spiritual and temporal wants, but they had amongst them from the outset men of wide culture, who soon rivalled the most famous doctors of the Universities. The sons of St. Dominic were the first to set a high standard of studies as part of the religious rule. In common with the Franciscans they had to fight their way in the teeth of opposition into university chairs, and once established there they fought each other. This spirit of emulation led to glorious achievement, and soon these two great orders well-nigh captured the universities, so that Roger Bacon, writing in 1271, says that for forty years the secular clergy had not produced a single treatise in theology, and in fact had come to think that they could not know anything unless they had sat for ten years or more at the feet of the Dominicans and Franciscans.[1]

But greatest of all the causes of the intellectual ferment in the thirteenth century was the re-discovery of the works of Aristotle. Fiction can hardly furnish a parallel to the strange fate which befell the writings of the

[1] *Opera Quaedam hactenus inedita Fr. Rogeri Bacon.* Edited by J. S. Brewer (Longmans, 1859). *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, cap. v., p. 428. Bacon had no great opinion of the teaching of the two orders, for he adds: 'Propter quod infinita superbia invasit istos ordines, quod praesumunt docere antequam discant; et necesse est quod doctrina eorum sit in fine corruptionis' (p. 429).

Stagirite.[1] To his pupil, Theophrastus, who succeeded him as master of the Lyceum, Aristotle bequeathed his manuscripts. On the death of Theophrastus they passed into the hands of his pupil Neleus, who left them as an heirloom to his family in Troas. They promptly hid the precious manuscripts, lest they should be confiscated for the royal library of the Prince of Pergamus. For a century and a half the crumbling pages lay neglected in a noisome cellar. Here, about a hundred years before Christ, they were discovered by Apellicon, a wealthy collector of books, who had them conveyed back to Athens. But they were not destined to remain long in the city of their birth, for at the fall of Athens in 86 B.C., they were seized by Sulla and brought to Rome. About 70 B.C. Andronicus of Rhodes published a complete edition of Aristotle, and for a time there was a revival of Peripateticism. Naturally interest was greatest amongst Greek-speaking students, and the pivot of Aristotelianism moved East to Constantinople. Nevertheless, as Zeller and others have shown, there are indications that notes, at least, of Aristotle's lectures, probably made by his pupils, were in circulation both before and after the edition of Andronicus. Towards the end of the fifth century, Boethius, 'the last of the Romans' (480–525 A.D.), translated into Latin some of Aristotle's *Organon*, with Porphyry's *Introduction*, and these logical treatises were, according to Abelard, all that was known of Aristotle in the West in the twelfth century.

Strangely enough, considering the constant intercommunication between the Greek Patriarchs and the Popes, it was not through Constantinople that Aristotle was re-introduced to the West. Here begins a second

[1] Strabo, xiii. 1. 54; Plutarch, *Vit. Sull.* ch. 26.

chapter in the romantic history of Aristotle's works. At Constantinople the Christological controversies which distracted the early Church were particularly acute, and in the fifth century a number of Nestorians and Eutychians deemed it prudent to withdraw to the security of the remote and liberal Edessa, where they established a school and devoted themselves to the task of translating Aristotle into the classical language of that seat of Oriental learning, Syriac. Towards the end of the century, however, the Emperor Zeno, at the instigation of Martyrus, the bishop of Edessa, expelled the heretics from 'the Athens of Syria,' and they fled across the Persian border to Nisibis, where they founded schools of logic and theology, and gradually translated Aristotle into Arabic. It is easy to see how Peripatetic philosophy, cultivated by Nestorians and Eutychians under the protection of Persian kings, came to be looked on as the root of heresy, and Platonism, by contrast, as the groundwork of orthodoxy. Henceforth for centuries Aristotle was an exile from the Christian West, and this period has been described not inaptly as 'the Flight into Egypt.' For Arabian philosophy is Arabian only in name. It is Greek in essence—Aristotelianism with Oriental modifications; and some of the greatest names of this period of philosophy, Alfarabi and Avicenna, are those of men who were not of pure Arabian descent. Theirs is the glory of having sheltered Aristotle during his long exile.

They were more than mere translators, these Arabians. Alfarabi (†950) wrote many philosophical treatises, and a formal commentary on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*. Avicenna (980–1037) set himself to purge Aristotelianism of the Neo-Platonic elements which had been introduced

by Alfarabi and others, though it must be confessed that he himself is not free from the taint of Neo-Platonism. With his death Aristotelianism once more incurred the *odium theologicum*. About 1100 A.D. Algazel declared that Aristotelianism was inimical to the creed of Mohammed. This was the beginning of a religious pogrom against culture which led to the burning of whole libraries. Moslem fanaticism waxed apace under the dynasty of the Almohades, until one of these vandals, through political intrigue, was driven into exile to Spain. Then the leopard changed its spots, and the exiled Caliph became a patron of learning.

The Spanish era of Peripateticism was heralded by Avicebron and reached its climax in Averroes (1126–1198), who, as Dante has it, 'made the great comment,' and abides with Aristotle amongst the spirits of the mighty in the 'meadow of fresh verdure.'[1] Like the Master, the Commentator died in exile, charged with impiety. Towards the end of the twelfth century the Spanish Caliph deprived Averroes of his many honours, and pronounced sentence of banishment against him, for that he had cultivated Greek philosophy to the prejudice of the Koran and the faith of Islam. To Averroes, Aristotle was indeed 'the master of those that know'; 'he considers him,' says Ueberweg, 'as the founders of religions are wont to be considered, as the man who alone, among all men, God permitted to reach the highest summit of perfection.'[2] In his Greater, Lesser and Shorter Commentaries, Averroes claims to mirror the mind of the master, to be 'faithful found among the faithless, faithful only he.' Yet he, too, is

[1] *Inferno* IV. 109–145.

[2] *History of Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 415.

tinged with the emanational conceptions of the Neo-Platonists, which blended so well with the anti-Trinitarian theology of the Mohammedans. At his death in 1198, Christian scholars were ready and eager to quarry in the newly discovered mine. The complete works of Aristotle were accessible. It was the age of John of Salisbury, Bernard Sylvester and Peter the Lombard. The early decades of the thirteenth century saw Aristotle's *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *De Anima*, and other treatises translated into Latin. But these translations were from the Arabic, Syriac or Hebrew, or in some way dependent on these versions, and there soon resulted a welter of variant readings. It is to the credit of St. Thomas that he would have nothing to do with these corrupt texts. He obtained permission for two friars of his order, accomplished hellenists, William of Moerbeke[1] and Henry of Brabant,[2] to translate the whole of Aristotle direct from the Greek, and it was on this Latin-Greek version that Aquinas worked. So faithful was this translation to the original that, as Ueberweg testifies, it may serve as a key to the exact reading of the Greek codices from which it was made.[3]

Altogether Aquinas wrote thirteen works in commentary of Aristotle. Unlike his master, Albert the Great, he adheres closely to the text, and never indulges in long digressions. Again, Albert kept his commentary

[1] Mediaeval Chronicles which, however, assign wrong dates: In Chronico Slavicorum apud Lindenbrogium ad annum 1249. In Cronico Susati, quod MS. servat Veneta SS. Joannis et Pauli bibliotheca (1267). Also contemporary testimony of Roger Bacon and Bernard Guidon. *Arch. Litt. u. Kirchengesch. Mitt.*, II, 226.

[2] Testimony of Aventinus: *Annalium Boiorum*, Lipsiae, 1710, I, vii. 9, p. 673.

[3] *History of Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 150.

on Aristotle quite distinct from his theology. The supreme achievement of Aquinas was the blending of philosophy and theology into one harmonious whole. There is no haziness of thought about this synthesis. Both in the *Contra Gentiles* and in the *Summa Theologica* he sets forth clearly the relation between philosophy and theology. In the third chapter of the first book of the *Contra Gentiles* he defines the boundaries of the provinces of reason and revelation and, characteristically enough, he bases the delimitation on a principle of Aristotle which he quotes from Boethius: 'The man of education will seek exactness so far in each subject as the nature of the subject admits.'[1] He then continues: 'Now in those things which we hold about God there is truth in two ways. For certain things that are true about God wholly surpass the capability of human reason, for instance that God is three in one: while there are certain things to which even natural reason can attain, for instance, that God is, that God is one, and others like these, which even the philosophers proved demonstratively of God, being guided by the light of natural reason.'[2] Early in the *Summa* he returns to the same theme: 'By natural reason we can know what belongs to the unity of the Essence, but not what belongs to the distinction of the Persons.' And he goes on to say that 'whoever tries to prove the Trinity of Persons by natural reason, derogates from Faith in two ways: firstly, by offending against the dignity of Faith, which is concerned with things surpassing human reason; and secondly, by incurring the ridicule of unbelievers,

[1] *Nichomachean Ethics* I. 1094b.

[2] *Summa contra Gentiles*, Dominican translation, Book I, ch. iii, pp. 4, 5.

who suppose that we stand upon such reasons and believe upon such grounds.'[1] He stresses the point that there can be no conflict between the teachings of reason and revelation, since both ultimately proceed from the God of eternal truth. St. Thomas thus excludes the pernicious theory of 'double truth,' which made it possible for a Christian disciple of Averroes (Siger of Brabant?) to say that, though reason compelled him to hold the essential unity of the active intellect, he nevertheless firmly held the opposite by faith.[2]

St. Thomas' precise demarcation of the boundaries of natural and revealed religion has been criticized on the ground that it led, logically and naturally, to Deism on the part of those who were not convinced Christians. This criticism overlooks the fact that Aquinas was at pains to show that the God of philosophy is not, like an Olympian deity, 'content to sit aloft and watch the world go round,' but a God 'who made the little and the great, and hath equally care of all.'[3] Furthermore the distinction was necessitated by the development of natural theology since the days of Anselm, and, as we have seen, the classification is in accord with an Aristotelian principle.

The problem before Aquinas in those days of intellectual upheaval was to reconcile Aristotle's acute

[1] *Summa Theologica*, Dominican translation, I, q. xxxii, a. 1; second number, p. 59.

[2] St. Thomas represents this disciple of Averroes (whom he does not name) as saying: *Per rationem concludo de necessitate, quod intellectus est unus numero; firmiter tamen teneo oppositum per fidem. De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas*, Opusculum XVI, Edit. Rom.; XXII apud De Maria, *Opuscula Philosophica et Theologica*, Vol. I, p. 491.

[3] *Wisdom* vi. 8.

penetration of nature as a whole with the doctrines of the Christian revelation. And here we have the clue to the few vital points on which Aquinas definitely broke with Aristotle. Naturally they appertain to theodicy: the nature of God, creation *ex nihilo*, personal immortality. These points of departure merit careful study, as they illustrate Aquinas' characteristic use of Aristotle.

And first as to the nature of God. We have seen that the fundamental categories of Aristotelianism are the potential and the actual, and Aristotle does not hesitate to push them to the logical issue of two ultimate principles; matter that is nothing but matter, pure potentiality, and form that is nothing but form, pure actuality. Actuality is the end to which every existent thing aspires, and in proportion as potentiality is converted into actuality we ascend the scale of being, at the head of which is sheer unconditioned actuality, devoid of all potentiality, and this is God. Now, unlike Plato's *demiurgus*, this pure form does not act on matter directly, but only indirectly, as that which is supremely desirable. Aristotle says: 'Now that which first imparts motion, does so as a thing that is loved. . . . From a principle, then, of this kind—I mean one that is involved in the assumption of a First Mover—hath depended Heaven and Nature.'[1] Incidentally we may remark that Aristotle seems to have thought that motion of this kind was essentially different from motion by impact. The fact that motion by desire (ὄρεξις), as Aristotle calls it, admits of a

[1] *Metaphysics*, translated by John H. McMahon (*Aristotle's Works*, Bohn's Classical Library), Book XI, ch. vii, pp. 330, 331. In the Oxford trans. by W. D. Ross, Book XII, ch. vii, 1072b.

mechanistic explanation has been thought to invalidate the famous argument from motion for the existence of God, elaborated by Aristotle in the eighth book of *Physics*. But if motion be taken in the metaphysical sense of transition from potency to act, we may say with Fr. Joyce that the argument 'is securely based on those fundamental first principles, which no physical discoveries can invalidate.'[1]

But, moot questions apart, what precisely is the Aristotelian principle, the point, as Dante has it, from which heaven and all nature hang?[2] Aristotle raises the question and answers it with precision. The pure actuality which is God is defined by Aristotle as thought of thought (*νόησις νοήσεως*).[3] That is to say, God is at once subject and object of thought, and therefore thinks only Himself. In Him no other activity is possible, and in this ceaseless self-contemplation lies the divine pleasure which, says Aristotle, 'is always one, *i.e.* simple.'[4] To think anything other than Himself would be to lower Himself, in fact to abdicate His essential changelessness. And thus the affairs of mice and men are beyond the care and ken of the God of Aristotle.[5] This splendid isolation of the Deity is combated by Aquinas both in the *Contra Gentiles*[6] and in the *Summa*. For Aquinas, as for Aristotle, God is form without matter, pure actuality, absolute perfection; but He is not merely the remote

[1] *Principles of Natural Theology*, p. 86.

[2] *Paradiso* XXVIII. 41.

[3] *Metaphysics* XI. 9.

[4] *Nichomachean Ethics* VII. 14; 1154b.

[5] Such is Averroes' interpretation of *Metaphysics* XI.

[6] Book 1, cc. l–liv, lxiii–lxxi.

final cause towards which things move, He is through His knowledge the efficient cause of all else. 'Since God is the cause of things by His knowledge,' says St. Thomas, 'His knowledge is extended as far as His causality extends. As the active power of God extends itself not only to forms, which are the source of universality, but also to matter, . . . the knowledge of God must extend itself to singular things, which are individualized by matter.'[1] After treating of the divine knowledge, St. Thomas proceeds to consider the divine will and the providence of God, without which not even a sparrow falleth to the ground, thereby altogether transcending the Aristotelian notion of divinity. For the God who is wrapped in self-contemplation Aquinas substitutes the personal God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God who 'is nigh unto all them that call upon him in truth.'[2]

From the consideration of the nature of God we pass to the question of the origin of the world. Though Aristotle criticizes the crude dualism of Anaxagoras, the logic of his own system leads to an unresolved quality. Since matter is irreducible to form, we are left with two ultimates: form without admixture of matter, and matter without admixture of form. The eternity of matter, taught both by Aristotle and Averroes, had been combated by the theological doctors of Islam and by the older scholastics. They had attempted to disprove the eternity of matter by reason.

St. Thomas, however, adopts a very different line. Like the Jewish philosopher Maimonides before him,

[1] *Summa Theologica*, Dominican translation, I, q. xiv, a. 11; first number, p. 200.

[2] *Ps.* cxliv. 18.

Aquinas contends that it is impossible from reason alone either to prove or to disprove the eternity of matter. Maimonides was a sort of Jewish Aquinas, who set himself to harmonize the teaching of the Old Testament with the philosophy of Aristotle, as known to him through the Arabian versions. Strange to relate, this Jewish rabbi exercised a considerable influence in moulding scholasticism. Albert the Great, Aquinas and Duns Scotus were all in some measure indebted to him. Born at Cordova in 1135, he died at Cairo in 1204. His family were driven into exile by the religious fanaticism of the Almohades, and later he himself incurred the *odium theologicum* of the Jews for having, in their opinion, extolled Aristotle to a level with Moses. In passing we may remark that it is indeed curious how Aristotle, throughout the centuries, has been the stormy petrel of religious controversy, whether Christian, Mohammedan or Jewish. Maimonides wrote many works both in Hebrew and Arabic, but the most famous of them is the *Guide of the Perplexed*, in which he sought *ex professo* to reconcile Jewish theology and Greek philosophy. His double allegiance naturally gave rise to many perplexities. Truth he held to be one and indivisible, and consequently for him there could be no conflict between reason and revelation. Yet Aristotle taught the eternity of matter, and the Bible the temporal origin of the world. To this harassing difficulty Maimonides boldly replied that, were the philosophical arguments for the eternity of matter coercive, it would be necessary to interpret the Mosaic cosmogony metaphorically; but, he maintained, the philosophical arguments are not coercive, reason alone cannot solve the question, and therefore we must

abide by the biblical account of the creation of the world in time. In terms of Aristotelian philosophy Maimonides insisted that the primary matter of the world, as well as its form, was in time produced by God out of nothing, *i.e.*, produced from no previously existing entity of any kind.

It was at this stage that St. Thomas took up the question, and with characteristic thoroughness threshed it out in all its philosophical and theological implications. On the one hand, he maintains that it cannot be proved by demonstration that the world always existed, and he adds: 'Nor are Aristotle's reasons (*Phys.* VIII) simply, but relatively demonstrative, *viz.*, in order to contradict the reasons of some of the ancients who asserted that the world began to exist in some quite impossible manner. This appears in three ways. Firstly, because, both in *Phys.* VIII and in *De Coelo* I, he premises some opinions, as those of Anaxagoras, Empedocles and Plato, and brings forward reasons to refute them. Secondly, because wherever he speaks of this subject, he quotes the testimony of the ancients, which is not the way of a demonstrator, but of one persuading of what is probable. Thirdly, because he expressly says (*Topic.* I), that there are dialectical problems, about which we have nothing to say from reason, as, *whether the world is eternal.*'[1] In the *Contra Gentiles* St. Thomas devotes seven chapters (XXXI–XXXVII) to showing that it is not necessary for created things to have been from eternity, and to answering the objections of his opponents.

[1] *Summa Theologica,* Dominican trans., 1, q. xlvi., a. 1; econd number, p. 243.

On the other hand, he lays it down that 'by faith alone do we hold, and by no demonstration can it be proved, that the world did not always exist.' 'The reason of this,' he says, 'is that the newness of the world cannot be demonstrated on the part of the world itself. For the principle of demonstration is the essence of a thing. Now everything according to its species is abstracted from *here* and *now*; whence it is said that universals are everywhere and always. Hence it cannot be demonstrated that man, or heaven, or a stone were not always. Likewise neither can it be demonstrated on the part of the efficient cause, which acts by will. For the will of God cannot be investigated by reason, except as regards those things which God must will of necessity; and what he wills about creatures is not among these, as was said above (q. xix, a. 3). But the Divine Will can be manifested by revelation, on which faith rests. Hence that the world began to exist is an object of faith, but not of demonstration or science. And it is useful to consider this, lest any one, presuming to demonstrate what is of faith, should bring forward reasons that are not cogent, so as to give occasion to unbelievers to laugh, thinking that on such grounds we believe things that are of faith.'[1]

The indebtedness of Aquinas to Moses Maimonides in this matter of maintaining the insufficiency of reason to prove or to disprove the eternity of matter has been much exaggerated, and it is undeniable that to the study of the vexed question of the origin of the universe St. Thomas made an entirely original contribution. He showed that the philosophical tenet of the eternity of matter was not, as Maimonides thought, in itself

[1] *Ibid.*, q. xlvi., a. 2; second number, p. 248.

irreconcilable with the dogma of creation *ex nihilo*. Primary matter must, in any event, be a creation of God. Even in the *Summa* there are few more masterly passages than that in which he deals with this most subtle question. He says: 'The ancient philosophers gradually, and as it were step by step, advanced to the knowledge of truth. At first being of grosser mind, they failed to realize that any beings existed except sensible bodies. And those among them who admitted motion, did not consider it except as regards certain accidents, for instance, in relation to rarefaction and condensation, by union and separation. And supposing as they did that corporeal substance itself was uncreated, they assigned certain causes for these accidental changes, as, for instance, affinity, discord, intellect, or something of the kind. An advance was made when they understood that there was a distinction between the substantial form and matter, which latter they imagined to be uncreated, and when they perceived transmutation to take place in bodies in regard to essential forms, such transmutations they attributed to certain universal causes, such as the "oblique circle" (the zodiac), according to Aristotle (*De Gener* II.), or ideas, according to Plato. But we must take into consideration that matter is contracted by its form to a determinate species, as a substance belonging to a certain species is contracted by a supervening accident to a determinate mode of being; for instance, man by (becoming) white. Each of these opinions, therefore, considered *being* under some particular aspect, either as *this* (being) or as *such* (being); and so they assigned particular efficient causes to things. Then others there were who arose to the consideration of *being* as being, and who assigned a

cause to things, not as *these*, or as *such* (beings), but (simply) as *beings*. Therefore whatever is the cause of things considered as beings, must be the cause of things, not only according as they are *such* by accidental forms, nor according as they are *these* by substantial forms, but also according to all that belongs to their being at all in any way. And thus it is necessary to say that also primary matter is created by the universal cause of things.'[1] This, be it noted, is a philosophical conclusion worked out on the basis of Aristotle's metaphysics, and it is in complete harmony with St. Thomas' other dictum, 'that God is the Creator of the world, so that the world began, is an article of faith.'[2]

But great as was the thirteenth-century controversy as to the eternity of matter, there was a still greater controversy with regard to the human soul, which ended only with the definition of the Fifth Lateran Council in 1512.[3] The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were distracted by conflicting interpretations of Aristotle's psychology. The Averroists contended that Aristotle had held to a shadowy impersonal immortality, whilst the Alexandrists maintained that, in Aristotle's view,

[1] *Ibid.*, q. xliv, a. 2; second number, p. 214.

[2] *Ibid.*, q. xlvi, a. 2; second number, p. 247.

[3] *Cum diebus nostris antiquus humani generis hostis nonnullos perniciosissimos errores superseminave et augere sit ausus, de natura praesertim animae rationalis quod mortalis sit, aut unica in cunctis hominibus; et nonnulli temere philosophantes, secundum saltem philosophiam, verum id esse asseverent; sancto approbante Concilio damnamus et reprobamus omnes asserentes animam intellectivam mortalem esse, aut unicam in cunctis hominibus, et haec in dubium vertentes: cum illa non solum vere, per se et essentialiter humani corporis forma existat, sicut in can. Clementis Papae V in generali Viennensi concilio edito continetur; verum et immortalis, et pro corporum quibus infunditur multitudine singulariter multiplicabilis, et multiplicata, et multiplicanda sit.* (Ex Bulla *Apostol. Regim.* Leonis X. in Conc. Lateranens. V. edita, 1512.)

the human soul perished utterly with the body. But these days were not yet. St. Thomas had to face a complicated problem in its Christian origins, so to speak. What did Aristotle really teach? And could his teaching be reconciled with the Christian doctrines of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body? Aquinas had succeeded in reconciling the eternity of matter with the doctrine of creation. Could he make a similar synthesis of reason and revelation with regard to the human soul? True to his general principle of activity and passivity, Aristotle distinguishes between the intellect which makes (ὁ ποιῶν),[1] and the intellect which suffers (παθητικός), between what St. Thomas calls the Active and Possible Intellect. For Aristotle, the soul is the form of the body, and on Aristotelian principles it perishes with the body. But above this soul which is the entelechy of the body, there is another soul (ψυχῆς γένος ἕτερον).[2] Its characteristics are thus set forth by Aristotle: it is the most divine part of man (*De Part. Anim.* IV. 10); it comes to man from without (*De Gener. Anim.* I. 3; 736b, 26); it is a true substance (*De Anima* I. 4; 408b, 19); it is thought, pure intelligence, the principle by which we think (*De Anima* II. 2; 413b, 26), and through it man participates in the divinity (*De Anima* II. 10; 656a, 7).

That Aristotle attributes some kind of immortality to this νοῦς ποιητικός, or active intellect, there can be little doubt. He says of it: it is a substance which was not made to perish (*De Anima*, I. 4; 498b, 19);

[1] Alexander of Aphrodisias, a Greek commentator of Aristotle in the second century, appears to have been the first to call it ὁ ποιητικὸς νοῦς.

[2] *De Anima* II. ii. 10.

it is the only element of our being that can exist apart (*De Anima*, II. 2; 403b, 26); in its separateness it is immortal and eternal (*De Anima*, III. 5; 430a, 221), but we are reminded that it is not the whole soul that is separable, but only mind or reason. Zeller has collected many passages showing that the soul which is the entelechy of the body cannot function apart from the body, and therefore perishes with the body. What then is it that survives? Apparently only the active intellect, which most modern commentators agree was rightly interpreted by Averroes as being one in all men.[1] Hence the immortality adumbrated by Aristotle cannot be in any sense personal; it does not permit of any survival of the individual after the break-up of the human compositum. It would be soul-survival without self-consciousness, recollection or even sentience.

Far otherwise St. Thomas. In him the main argument for personal immortality reaches its final perfection, and he bases that argument on Aristotelian principles. In the fourteenth article of his *De Anima*, St. Thomas discusses the question, whether the human soul is immortal. He begins by lodging twenty-one objections against immortality, four of them containing explicit references to Aristotle. But in the *Sed contra* Aristotle is quoted again, thus: 'Besides, the Philosopher says (*De Anima* II. 2) that the intellect is separated as a perpetual entity from the corruptible. But the intellect is part of the soul, as he himself says. Therefore the human soul is incorruptible.' In Aquinas's view, then, Aristotle ought logically to have held the doctrine of

[1] St. Thomas is generally conceded to have been correct in asserting that Aristotle did not hold the Possible Intellect to be one in all men.

personal immortality. For Aquinas, as for Aristotle, the soul is the form of the body. Against Plato, Aristotle had emphasized the unity of the soul in its manifold activities, and St. Thomas now pushes that doctrine to its logical conclusion. The human soul is the principle, not only of sensitive and vegetative life, which it has in common with plants and the lower animals, but also of the intellectual activities which are peculiar to man. These latter are shown to be, in their very essence, independent of matter, and therefore of the bodily organism. In the present state of the soul's actuating the body, and operating through the body, the bodily organs furnish the material, the data as it were, for the mind's operations; but it does not follow that the mind cannot act unless material be provided in this way. Being essentially independent of matter in its highest activities of intellect and will, the human soul has not within it any principle of corruption, and therefore, after the dissolution of the body, it can continue in conscious activity. Nevertheless even then it is the form of the body, with a transcendental relation to the body, which will be realized again at the general resurrection. St. Thomas insists on this point to the extent of stating that when we say, 'O, St. Peter, pray for us,' we are indulging in metaphor; and that strictly we ought to say, 'O, Soul of St. Peter, pray for us,' since St. Peter was, and will be again, soul and body in one being. Thus the doctrine of human immortality is worked out on strictly Aristotelian lines. Here it may be said that Aquinas is more true to Aristotelian principles than Aristotle himself. Admittedly there is great confusion in Aristotle's doctrine of the soul, but as to the functional unity of the soul which is the

form of the body there is, and can be, no question; and herein we have the basis of the metaphysical argument for immortality.

In the apologetical *Contra Gentiles*,[1] St. Thomas advances another argument, and this too rests on a principle of Aristotle, on a principle that has come to rank with the axioms of Euclid: 'nature does nothing in vain.'[2] St. Thomas states the argument with his customary lucidity and brevity: 'The natural appetite cannot possibly be frustrated. Now man naturally desires to exist always: . . . Therefore man acquires perpetuity in regard to his soul, which apprehends being simply and for all time.' Thus both the metaphysical and teleological arguments for immortality are derived from the Philosopher, as St. Thomas reverently and lovingly calls Aristotle. The concept of God, eternal creation and personal immortality—these are the fundamental points on which Aquinas departs from Aristotle, whilst building up a consistent theodicy based on the principles of Aristotelianism and the data of revelation.

The age in which Aquinas lived was an age of reconstruction. Many brilliant minds besides his own were working on the synthesis of the new learning and the old creed, and it is in the retrospect rather than at the time that Aquinas dominates. There were, too, the inevitable reactionaries who were scandalized at St. Thomas's breach with the traditions of the earlier scholasticism. Here the points of departure were many and vital. Of the theory of a plurality of substantial forms, Peckham, writing in St. Thomas' day, says

[1] Book II., ch. lxxix.
[2] *De Anima* III. 9, 6.

that it still held the assent of the whole world.[1] Aquinas assailed it, and vindicated the unity of the substantial form, making it a central principle of his whole system. In his formulation and application of this pregnant doctrine he was debtor to no man; it is the outcome of his own penetrating insight into, and broad grasp of, Peripateticism. Again, he rejected the current opinion that hylomorphic composition was the mark of the creature, and taught the doctrine of subsisting forms, forms existing without relation to matter, which individualize themselves, but which are nevertheless contingent. In these angelic forms, however, he still recognizes a composition analogous to matter and form, in refusing to identify in them essence and existence, as he does in God alone. He rejected, too, the prevalent notion of spermal powers implanted in matter by God, in favour of the theory of the eduction of form from the potency of matter. To the Augustinian theory of the identity of the soul with its faculties, he opposed the theory of a real distinction between them severally and the substance of which they are the powers, though this cannot be taken to be in any sense an entitative distinction. In general outlook he was frankly an intellectualist in contradistinction to the Augustinians, who had proclaimed the primacy of the will.[2] On these and other matters so novel did St. Thomas' teaching seem to the Platonizing school which actually held the field, that there is no need of further explanation as to why he should have been mistrusted and even opposed with bitter hostility.

[1] Ehrle, J. Peckham, etc., p. 178.

[2] This academic question is a totally different one from that debated between intellectualists and voluntarists of the present day.

It must be remembered that the complete works of Aristotle came to the West in uncritical versions, accompanied by Moorish commentaries, and by at lest two spurious works of far-reaching influence, the Neo-Platonic production entitled *The Theology of Aristotle*,[1] and *The Book on Causes*, which St. Thomas says did not come from Aristotle, but from 'Proclus the Platonist.' The glamour of Aristotle dazzled men's minds. Private interpretation of the Bible in the sixteenth century hardly led to greater excesses than private exposition of Aristotle in the opening decades of the thirteenth century. At Paris, Amalrich taught a pseudo-mystical pantheism, whilst David of Dinant identified God with matter and lapsed into crude materialism. Weird and wild speculation ran riot. A steadying influence of some kind was necessary if mental balance was to be preserved, and we are not astonished to find that in 1210 a provincial council, after condemning Amalrich and David of Dinant, decreed 'that neither the books of Aristotle on natural philosophy, nor commentaries on the same, should be read, whether publicly or privately, at Paris.' In 1215 the prohibition was extended to the *Metaphysics* and the Arabian commentaries, though it was expressly stated that the logical treatises might be used in the University. In 1231 Pope Gregory IX,

[1] St. Thomas probably refers to *The Theology of Aristotle* when he writes of having seen 14 books of Aristotle in a language which he did not know (Greek or Arabic), these books not having been as yet translated into Latin. He says: *Huiusmodi autem quaestiones certissime colligi potest Aristotelem solvisse in his libris quos patet eum scripsisse de substantiis separatis, ex his quae dicit in principio* 12 *Metaphysicae; quos etiam libros vidimus numero* 14, *licet nondum translatos in linguam nostram.* (*De Unitate Intellectus Contra Averroistas*, Opusculum XVI, Edit. Rom.; XXII apud De Maria, *Opuscula Philosophica et Theologica*, Vol. I, p. 467.)

whilst renewing the condemnation of Aristotle's *Physics*, decided to appoint a Commission to examine and expurgate the works of Aristotle. However, doubtless in consequence of Aristotle's real teaching becoming better known, the Commission never sat. For before 1225, under the patronage of the Emperor Frederich II, new translations from the Arabic had been made by Michael Scot, Herman the German and others, so that students were able to discriminate between the real doctrine of Aristotle and its Arabic, Jewish and Neo-Platonic embellishments. By 1254 the study of Aristotle formed part of the regular curriculum of the University of Paris.

During the second half of the century, it was Aquinas, not Aristotle, who became the storm-centre. To the defenders of the older scholasticism he seemed to have introduced many dangerous novelties. Not only seculars and Franciscans, but even fellow-Dominicans fell foul of him, both at Paris and Oxford. Exception was taken, in particular, to his doctrine of the unity of substantial form, and to his teaching with regard to the angels. At Paris in 1270 an attempt was made to have these views condemned. Happily it failed, but in 1277 the reactionaries succeeded in including amongst a number of obnoxious propositions, chiefly taken from Averroes, certain doctrines of St. Thomas, which were condemned with the rest. In England, the onslaught on Aquinas was led by a Dominican, Robert Kilwardby, Archbishop of Canterbury, who held firmly to no less than four substantial forms. A few days after the Paris condemnation, the University of Oxford, at the instigation of Kilwardby, condemned a number of theses, some of which embodied Thomistic teaching,

and not unnaturally that of the unity of substantial form. But this was the end of Dominican opposition to St. Thomas. Albert the Great's uncompromising championship of his illustrious pupil rallied the great Dominican Order, and in 1278 a general chapter held at Milan formally proclaimed the official teaching of the Order to be that of Aquinas, and thenceforth his name and fame were in the keeping of white-robed advocates of great ability, notably of Giles of Lessines and Ptolemy of Lucca. Kilwardby was succeeded in the See of Canterbury by a Franciscan, John Peckham, who in 1286 renewed his predecessor's condemnation of certain Thomistic theses, and urged upon all a return to the earlier scholasticism of St. Francis and St. Bonaventure.

In reality, however, these local condemnations were of little consequence. They had no binding force outside of Paris and Oxford, and they were powerless to arrest the incoming tide of Thomism. The balance, the symmetry and the sobriety of that marvellous synthesis of philosophy and theology compelled the reasoned assent of unprejudiced thinkers, and continued to mould scholasticism until the dark days of its decadence, when Aquinas was as little honoured as Aristotle in the twilight of Greek philosophy. This synthesis of philosophy and theology is at once the crowning glory and the characterictic achievement of St. Thomas. Even his master, Albert the Great, had spoken with two voices, and the voice of the philosopher was not always in harmony with the voice of the theologian. Not so Aquinas. He speaks always with one voice, in the clear tones of one whose every utterance is an expression of the unification of knowledge. In the

Thomistic fusion of philosophy and theology scholasticism reached its zenith. Its decline dates from the neglect of the synthetic principle. And hence Erdmann and others see the beginning of the disintegration of scholasticism in Scotus, who, in excluding creation and immortality from the scope of natural theology, narrowed the realm of reason and widened the sphere of faith, thus opening up the way for his pupil, William of Ockham, to declare that reason plays no part whatever in establishing the truths of religion. The Thomistic antithesis is reached in Ockham's disciple, Gabriel Biel (1425–1495), who stood for the absolute divorce of reason and revelation, and who merits the mournful title of 'the last of the scholastics.'

And thus we have seen how the intellectual anarchy which attended the re-introduction of Aristotle into the West, gave place, chiefly through the genius of Aquinas, to a golden period of balanced culture. But it was as though the synthetic movement spent itself in this highest product of its energies. Even in the life-time of Aquinas, disruptive principles were at work. *Facilis descensus Averni.* Thomism suffered the fate of Aristotelianism. With the rise of Humanism its eclipse was complete, and for centuries it passed out of the keeping of living minds. The books in which it was expressed moulded in libraries, like Aristotle's parchments in the cellar of Troas. It is true that Aquinas was 'rediscovered' before the coming of his Apellicon, but he had his Apellicon none the less in one of the greatest of modern Roman Pontiffs, and we cannot more fittingly bring this paper to a close than by citing the enlightened words in which Pope Leo XIII recalled Christian students to the sane study of Aquinas:

'While, then, We pronounce that every wise saying, no matter who said it, every profitable invention or contrivance, no matter who contrived it, is to be willingly and gratefully taken up, We earnestly exhort you all, Venerable Brethren, for the defence and adornment of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, for the advancement of all sciences, to restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas and propagate it far and wide to the best of your power. The wisdom of St. Thomas, We say; for if there be in the scholastic doctors any excessive subtlety of inquiry, any inconsiderate teaching, anything less consistent with the ascertained conclusions of a later generation, in a word, anything in any way improbable, We have no mind to hold that up for the imitation of our age.'[1]

[1] *Aeterni Patris*, Aug. 4th, 1879.

IV.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS AND MODERN THOUGHT.

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(1) St. Thomas and Physical Science.

The subject of the two lectures I have to deliver is so large and complex that I must necessarily limit what I have to say in each to one or two definite and restricted points. Whether in physical science or in psychology, the genius of St. Thomas Aquinas is in itself a matter which would require volumes rather than short essays, even to present and criticize his doctrine in the briefest fashion; and modern thought is so diverse and ramified in all the provinces of natural science and philosophy that scant justice could be done to it even in a course of many lectures. For this reason I shall consider the subject of my first paper limited mainly to the point of view of St. Thomas in the physical sciences, rather than to any detailed content of his doctrine; and I shall hope that the contrast between his thought and that of contemporary thinkers will thus, at least in its general aspect, be indicated without the necessity of comparing them, point by point, throughout all the range of our present-day sciences of Nature and of Mind.

The most striking point of general contrast, though there are several which might be considered, is to be found in the *aim* of St. Thomas, as compared with that of modern scientific investigators. The true modern man of science is interested in his work for its own sake. The secrets which he laboriously wrests from Nature are his reward; and the power which a knowledge of those secrets places in his hands he often leaves to others to enjoy. I speak, of course, of the original investigator, the research worker; and not of those who merely teach science, or popularize it. For science lives by advancing; and advance is only possible by research. Such men do not look for pecuniary recompense for their work. They do not, as was the fashion of a few decades ago, parade it as a refutation of the cherished beliefs of the simple folk. But, rather, they hold it as something accomplished, or in the doing; of worth for truth in its own right; and, in the main, neither definitely in support of, nor definitely opposed to, any system of philosophy or religious belief. Nowadays Science is written with a capital S, and is an end in itself.

St. Thomas Aquinas, though in a sense he was a man of science, was interested in science mainly as a philosopher, and in philosophy chiefly as a theologian. For, above all, he was a divine in the golden age of theology, when that science was held by all alike to be the Queen of all the sciences. Such physical science as St. Thomas knew was entirely made tributary by him to the exposition and defence of the Catholic faith. The Aristotelian natural philosophy he made his own; the store of traditional patristic teaching, with its platonist and neo-platonist colouring, and the science

of the Moslems, was all bent to the same end. The most mature, and in many ways the most perfect[1] of his works, the *Summa Theologica*, gives us a complete science of theology systematized by the aid of philosophical principles, without which it could not have laid claim to be a science at all; and in that *Summa* there are gems of scientific observation and of scientific theory that even to-day are worthy of profound consideration. This, his last work, not brought to completion at the time of his death, sums up better, perhaps, than anything else could do the development of St. Thomas' general outlook upon the problems of knowledge, of the world, of self, and of life. It embodies the conclusions of his science, just as it is steeped throughout in his philosophy; and, though natural science is in it rightly kept subordinate to theology, it gives us evidence —even if we had no other of his writings to prove it— of a wide acquaintance with such physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology and psychology as was known in his time.

In his prologue to the *Summa* St. Thomas tells his readers that it is a work for beginners. This prologue is worthy of the attention of every scholar. It is the key to his whole mentality and outlook. St. Thomas began his literary career by writing scientific and philosophical works.[2] He ended it with a far greater personal achievement; in which he brought almost the entire knowledge of his time together, and laid all purely human learning then known tributary to divine revelation.

[1] The *Summa contra Gentiles* is considered by many to be St. Thomas' most perfect work.

[2] *De Principiis Naturae* (1255); *De Ente et Essentia* (1256).

The *Summa Theologica* epitomizes the man and his ideology. Yet in his own mind it was planned to be, as he himself tells us, a simple treatise on sacred doctrine, brief and clear, 'in so far as the subject-matter permits'; in which his aim 'is to teach those things which have to do with the Christian religion in the way which best accords with the instruction of beginners.'[1]

The meaning of this masterly prologue is clear. St. Thomas, after a career of unexampled brilliance, both as student and teacher, in the universities of his time, intended to use all the powers of his wonderfully retentive memory and penetrating intellect, all his science and philosophy, in the writing of an introductory textbook of theology. And a close study of the *Summa* itself, more than any other of his works, reveals the amazing fund of information which he brought to this task and the critical poise of judgment with which he appraised it.

The information which St. Thomas possessed was encyclopaedic; and it is important for our purpose to understand what, in the main, were its sources. It has been commonly supposed that Aquinas was wholly indebted to Aristotle; and certainly the general peripatetic cast of his doctrine lends colour to that view. But there were other influences that played no less strongly upon the formation of his thought. For six or seven hundred years before his time the Christian culture of the Western world had practically been isolated from all other forms of thought and culture. It had developed autonomously from the rich legacies of the Fathers—mainly the Alexandrians, Damascene and Augustine—together with the meagre infiltrations of

[1] Prologue to the *Summa Theologica*.

Aristotelian method, by way of the logical treatises which had been translated by Boethius. It had been stimulated to original philosophical construction by the challenge made to mediaeval thought by Porphyry. From the time of Isidore of Seville and Gundasallinus, scholastic theology and philosophy had been slowly building themselves up. During these centuries there was small necessity for the Christian thinker to be also an apologist; and the polemics of philosophy, sharp and long drawn out as they were, on the whole were tending towards the solution at which they finally arrived. For there was much of the peripatetic outlook even among the forerunners of fully developed scholasticism.

But there was more than this. There was an oriental tinge of mysticism colouring their thought. The stream that welled from the genius of Plato, that was fed by the neo-platonists, ran strong in the tradition which was the heritage of St. Thomas.

His thought was the product of at least three sources of knowledge, and its final synthesis in the *Summa* is evidence of the fact. St. Thomas was, first and foremost, a Christian. Accordingly, he took the Christian revelation as a fact, not to be argued about, but to be argued *into* a system of theology, complete, comprehensive and compelling. The acceptance of the Christian revelation as a fact was no attitude peculiar to St. Thomas. It was the common attitude of the Catholic of his time. But it is an attitude which is, for the non-Catholic, exceedingly difficult to comprehend. To this fact is due, I am convinced, much of the misunderstanding that obscures the true reading of mediaeval history, as well as the lack of penetration

into the minds of thinkers like St. Thomas by those even who make some study of their works. For philosophers of alien religious convictions, or of none, must find it difficult to grasp the fine shades of meaning of a philosophy that is deeply embedded in the theological matrix of Catholicism, just as historians whose common daily life is not Catholic, and who have not lived in a Catholic atmosphere, must find it hard to evaluate aright the history of Catholic times.

I feel that this is worth saying and worth keeping in mind—even in connexion with St. Thomas' physical and psychological science. St. Thomas was a convinced Christian; and without his conviction not only would his great works never have been written; but it would have been impossible for him to write them. The truth of revelation is the cement which holds together in his synthetic theology all the chaotic elements which, at first sight, would seem so incongruous.

A second source of his knowledge was the rediscovered philosophy and natural science of Aristotle. Towards the latter part of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries the thought of Western Europe was brought into contact with new intellectual forces. The greater portion of the works of Aristotle found its way into the hands of the schoolmen for the first time; and they became acquainted also with the Moslem commentaries on the Philosopher. Other Greek writings —on mathematics, astronomy, medicine—became known at about the same date, or somewhat earlier; and the students of Europe were kept busy for many years translating, assimilating, harmonizing this immense volume of novel philosophical and scientific thought that had poured in upon them. In his genuine

acceptance of all this learning, which made of the thirteenth century a brilliant period of renaissance, in his critical survey of it, and, in particular, in his patient separation of what he believed to be the true Aristotelian doctrine from the accretions due to the Arabians, St. Thomas gives evidence of a rarely enlightened and scientific spirit. But it was not merely that he could see in Aristotle's scientific observations and philosophical theories the splendour of natural truth. He perceived in them the allies of revelation; and he made them his own in order that he might point the minds of men by the light of reason, through Nature, to God.

To the third source of knowledge which blended with the others in the mind of St. Thomas allusion has already been made. It was a second intellectual force which broke in upon Western thought with the philosophy of Aristotle. This was the philosophy and the science of the Arabians. Similar influences had made themselves felt before this time; as, for example, in the teaching of Scotus Erigena. And the traditional mystical and neo-platonist currents in the patristic stream were interwoven closely with the emanationism and pantheism of this new incursion. The new doctrines were particularly dangerous because, in a very subtle way, they were hovering close to familiar, and accepted, teaching. St. Thomas saw and strenuously combated what was dangerous in them. But he remained throughout his life, and in his doctrine, a mystic or contemplative.

Now this means that there were in his thought two fundamental, but apparently contradictory, tendencies. On the one hand, he accepts from Aristotle his view of

the nature of man—who, if not the central, is at least one of the great pivotal points of philosophy. But—to neglect all else—Aristotle made of man a creature whose knowledge of God and eternal truths had to be acquired in just the same way as any other knowledge is acquired; namely, from the things of sense. Herein lies the essentially scientific character of all the philosophy of both Aristotle and St. Thomas. It rests upon the broad basis of empirical fact and observation.

But Aristotle held, further, that the life of the personal soul of man ends with the cessation of the life of the body. And for him there is no revelation, nor way of direct knowledge of the Deity, nor vision of God in a future life.

On the other hand, St. Thomas inherited from Plato and the neo-platonists, mainly through St. Augustine and Pseudo-Denis, a firm grasp of the Absolute and a conviction that the end of man is union with God.

It is by no means astonishing, in the case of a mind like that of St. Thomas, that such doctrines should come together in his thought. Great genius always resolves itself into antinomies. But the antinomies had to be reconciled; and the keynote of their reconciliation is their synthesis in the Christian conception of God and His revelation. *In lumine tuo videbimus lumen.* The dominance of that note enables St. Thomas to resolve the disharmonies of the other components in the full and swelling chord of his total doctrine. That doctrine, as we have seen, is theological; but it was a theology which had its supernatural roots spread widely in philosophy and natural science.

It is only true to say that, in the time of St. Thomas,

there was little or no science in the strictest modern sense of the term. Indeed, it has until recently been believed that there was no science in any sense during the mediaeval period. But if science is to be accepted as knowledge, or the desire of knowledge, or organized knowledge, or knowledge of things in their causal relations, it must be evident, except to the most prejudiced mind, that scholasticism consists in very little else. Theology is a science—philosophy no less; as well in the mind of St. Thomas as in fact. Indeed, the germs of the most modern forms of present-day science, though not so organized, elaborated or worked out in detail, are to be discovered in the writings of Aquinas and his contemporaries.

A recent historian[1] of scientific thought considers 'the making of' knowledge the true test of scientific activity; and accordingly credits the thirteenth century with little science, since in it little was original but much relearned. There was, it is true, small advance in the observation of phenomena and in the construction of hypotheses to explain them. But this is scarcely to be wondered at; for the immediate scientific task of the great thinkers of the thirteenth century—apart from the synthesis of knowledge which they made—was to assimilate and disentangle the threads of the immense web of fact and theory that had so suddenly been outspread before their eyes. All that had come to them from Greece—the thought of Aristotle and Galen and Ptolemy; all that had been patched and knotted and rewoven by the Arabs—particularly by Avicenna and Averroes—had to be reconstructed over again in

[1] Charles Singer, *Mediaeval Contributions to Modern Civilization-Science.*

their thought, in order that some one pattern should emerge from the medley of bizarre shapes and colours. It was small wonder that there was little progress in original scientific investigation while this colossal work was going on.

In a sense the movement was an attempt to return to the past; but it was a regression that was necessary if there was to be any forward movement in the future. And, in the midst of it all, there was still some very real progress and positive achievement. Among that brilliant group of thinkers that marked the zenith of scholasticism—Alexander of Hales, Robert Grosseteste, Blessed Albert the Great, and St. Thomas Aquinas—the scientific observations of antiquity were verified, and at least some original research was carried out.

Blessed Albert, particularly, shows clear and admitted evidence of the scientific spirit.[1] His commentary on the *History of Animals* points to original observation, as well as to penetration into the scientific method of Aristotle. His original work[2] on plants claims for him a yet higher place as a botanist of conspicuous order. He was well acquainted with geography, astronomy, mineralogy, chemistry, and medicine. His remarks on the magnet, solar and lunar rainbows, and the refractive properties of crystals are astonishing.

With all his science, however, this master of St. Thomas combines an amazing credulity which is singularly absent in the mentality of his illustrious pupil. We look in vain in the works of Aquinas for any such tales as are to be found in the writings of Albert. There

[1] He is reckoned by Singer as the father of botany.

[2] *De Vegetalibus et Plantis.*

is nothing in St. Thomas parallel to the story of the toad and the emerald.[1]

St. Thomas was the pupil of Albert and reader under him. But the pupil was above his master in critical acumen. Under the direction of Blessed Albert, St. Thomas commented Aristotle; which is tantamount to saying that he learned most of the natural science that had already been acquired. Making allowance for Albert's occasional credulity, it is hardly possible that St. Thomas should have been formed by such a master without being steeped in his scientific spirit. And indeed we find evidence of it, not only in his commentaries and original scientific works, but in those two great and peculiar productions of his genius which he gave to the world—the one as a treatise on the Christian faith for Christian students, the other as an exposition of its reasonableness for unbelievers.

The method of didactic doubt which he adopts in the *Summa Theologica*, for example, is thoroughly scientific. He strikes the true note of scientific criticism—to be applied to every doctrine save those of divine revelation

[1] Thorndike (*History of Magic and Experimental Science*) translates the passage as follows:—'An emerald was recently seen among us, small in size but marvellous in beauty. When its virtue was to be tested, some one stepped forth and said that, if a circle was made about a toad with the emerald, and then the stone was set before the toad's eyes, one of two things would happen. Either the stone, if of weak virtue, would be broken by the gaze of the toad; or the toad would burst, if the stone was possessed of full natural vigour. Without delay things were arranged as he bade; and after a short lapse of time, during which the toad kept its eye unswervingly upon the gem, the latter began to crack like a nut and a portion of it flew from the ring. Then the toad, which had stood immobile hitherto, withdrew as if it had been freed from the influence of the gem.' Thorndike adds: 'In the incident just narrated Albert was perhaps tricked by some travelling magician.' Vol. II, pp. 546, 547.

—in reducing the value of the teaching of philosophers to mere probability, when it is used in support of theology.[1] This critical spirit is of the very essence of science. Further, he has recourse to physical and physiological observations, and even suggests simple psychological experiment, when he wishes to support his arguments; as, for example, in the occurrence of mental images (I, 84, 7, c.), the localization of brain functions (I, 78, 4), the disorders of delirium and lethargy (I, 84, 7 ad 1; I, 84, 8, obj. 2 and ad 2), and the somatic resonance in emotions (I–II, 22, 2, and *De Veritate*, 26, 2 and 3). These examples are taken from physiology and psychology; but they show the scientific character of his thought.

The general aim of science has always been to account for change and formulate its laws. Accordingly, the aim of the physical sciences, in the widest sense, is to account for material changes of various kinds—the movements of bodies through space, the alteration of their qualities and properties, their generation and corruption, and the like.

The terrestrial physics of St. Thomas are those of Aristotle; his astronomy in the main is Ptolemy's, though he appears to have doubts as to the adequacy of the doctrine of eccentrics and epicycles; and even (*De Coelo et Mundo*, Lib. 2, lect. 17) goes so far as to suggest that some other explanation than the geocentric theory may be discovered which will better

[1] *Summa Theologica*, I, 1, 8 ad 2. '. . . though a citation from authority based on human reason is the weakest of all arguments. . . .' He had already written (*Contra Gentiles*, Bk. I, chap. 2): 'custom, and especially custom to which we have been born, acquires the force of nature; whence it happens that tenets with which the mind has been imbued from childhood, are as firmly held as if they were self-evident by nature.'

explain celestial phenomena. Here, again, is evidence of the genuine critical and scientific spirit.

The two *Summae* contain the mature result of all his previous thought; and it is clear that in them he bases all his constructions upon observed facts, to which, as we have seen, he sometimes specifically alludes. But there is continually a background of scientific fact behind all his philosophical elaboration; and if in these works he does not emphasize it, this is because his interest in science, and even in philosophy, is entirely subservient to the main purpose for which he writes.

In detail, most of the physics and astronomy which St. Thomas adopted has long since been overthrown; as, for example, the doctrines of 'natural place' and 'natural motion'; the straight line movement of sublunary bodies and the superior circular movements of the stars and planets; the rotation of the spheres by angelic motors, and their influence in bringing about changes on the earth, in particular with regard to the destinies of men—a belief which had far-reaching consequences in the popular astrology of his time.

But there are parts of his theories on change of more general application which are still worthy of attention. His conception, in particular, of the rhythmic evolution, or transformation, which takes place in Nature, is one of these.

It is true, as Professor Dorlodot has lately shown,[1] that St. Thomas was not a thoroughgoing evolutionist—and this mainly because he was too good an Aristotelian. But he does teach that there is no violent or abrupt transition in Nature. This may be seen in the general

[1] Dorlodot, *Darwinism and Catholic Thought*, Vol. I, English trans. by Dr. Messenger, 1922.

theory of the 'Mixed,' and in his embryology. The 'Mixed' is the equivalent to what we would call a chemical compound, the synthesis of its elements. St. Thomas, in company with all scholastics, holds the theory of matter and form as the co-principles of all material things. Matter is a determinable potentiality; and all cosmic Nature, since it is material, can be considered to constitute a vast reservoir of potentiality, a latent possibility of forms. Form is determinant—that which makes the potentiality of matter actual as this or that kind of thing, possessing such and such properties. Now, when several material elements, each having its own properties, combine, a gradual levelling up of these properties occurs until the point at which they become similar to those of the compound; and at this point a new form, determining the matter to a new kind of being, with its appropriate properties, takes the place of the old ones. There is no gap or hiatus. There is no moment of time at which no form determines the matter; for matter cannot exist at all without form.

What is important here is to notice that the succession of forms is determined by natural law. They do not succeed each other capriciously, but according to an order of propinquity in the total series of graded natural forms. The theory may be represented by inscribing a dotted diagonal in an upright square. Each point in the diagonal represents a kind of form, from the lowest to the highest; and each substantial change in Nature is represented by a passage from one point to another, in either direction.

St. Thomas' application of this theory to embryology is well known. The human embryo passes gradually through a number of stages of development, in which

it is successively animated by a vegetable, an animal, and finally by a human soul. There is both unity and continuity in the process, which evinces inexorable law, and displays an intrinsic design in the structure of all the many natures that go to make up Nature as a whole.

From what has just been said, it will appear that finality, or teleology, has an important part to play in the scientific system of St. Thomas, and in this respect his physical science is radically different from that of modern thinkers; for contemporary physicists consider only the causal relations of constant antecedence with quantitative equivalence of energy. The view of St. Thomas is more philosophical, more comprehensive; and his doctrine of the four causes of change, together with the privation of the precise effect which change induces, enables him to apply it without exception to all forms of change whatever. He is thus able to speak of the natural appetites of even inorganic natures, and to embrace the whole created universe in one common scheme or plan. In any case, there is no very obvious reason why determinism in physics and teleology—the *vis a tergo* and the *vis a fronte*—should be incompatible, or mutually exclusive.[1] On the contrary, if one ceases to reify abstractions and gets back to concrete things, the causal doctrine of St. Thomas will be seen alone to be adequate to the facts.

I have said nothing of the wonderful use of scientific knowledge which was made in the time of St. Thomas, with which he was perfectly familiar—medicine, surgery,

[1] For a very important statement of this, cf. *Reflective Thinking*, by Columbia Associates in Philosophy (Constable and Co.), pp. 146 *sqq*.

architecture, metallurgy, glass-staining, dyeing, and the other scientific arts.

Nor have I spoken of the lack of instruments of scientific precision which made the refinements of science, as we know it today, impossible in the thirteenth century. We moderns work with delicately constructed instruments which were unknown to St. Thomas. He and his contemporaries had no telescope, no microscope, no agate knife-edge balance. He had no means of recording minute changes of temperature, or electrical phenomena, or fractions of seconds, or of millimetres. Without instruments such as these modern science could not have reached its present stage of accuracy. And yet today it is recognized—such is the effect of the personal equation in all observation—that no single measurement is trustworthy; that even physical records have to be corrected by the use of mathematical formulae.[1]

St. Thomas had none of these refinements of research; yet he drew conclusions from observed facts of the same general character as those studied today. You may see more with the microscope than with the naked eye; but what you see is characteristically similar in both cases. Microscopic examination does not give the lie to ordinary vision.

In what, then, does the physical science of St. Thomas differ in principle—for it would be idle to pretend that it does not greatly differ in range of fact and in theory—from our own? We have already anticipated this question by two considerations, the one external, the

[1] This is even more necessary in Psychology and the Social Sciences, where it is impossible to isolate the observed phenomena for which explanations are sought.

other intrinsic, to science. For St. Thomas the value of science is subordinate to theology. He is also a teleologist. But, apart from this, there is really little difference.

Professor Percy Nunn, in his presidential address to the Aristotelian Society,[1] has really shown this agreement. He points out how the physical sciences, as distinct from the biological sciences and geology, present their objects as they are conceived by the common-sense man. And it is the objects—not the abstractions—that matter. The objects of modern science are the imaginative constructions of reality.[2] So are those of St. Thomas; though there is far more than mere imaginative construction in his theory. This essentially requires principles or elements which—though they certainly can be thought—are absolutely unimaginable.

We may, and must, admit that St. Thomas was wrong and inaccurate in much of his physical science. But, granted that the astronomy of the thirteenth century was anthropomorphic, that the terrestrial physics was largely misleading; granted that the chemistry was but inchoate, and so on for the rest: this was surely due to the lack of opportunity, the want of instruments of precision, the larger philosophical view which the thirteenth century scholastics took, rather than to lack of scientific spirit or scientific method.

I hope I have shown that St. Thomas was not a mere servile imitator even in the matter of natural science,

[1] *Scientific Objects and Commonsense Things*, Proc. Arist. Soc., Nov. 5th, 1923.

[2] Thus the concept of the electron is an imaginative construction, based on an astronomical plan, together with the notions of *plus* and *minus*, or positive and negative—a conception not far remote from hylomorphism.

and that he did not deserve that reproach which Lord Morley addressed to not a few thinkers of our own day.[1]

I hope I have shown as well that the real differences between the scientific and philosophical thought of St. Thomas and that of contemporary men of science lie mainly in the differences between synthesis and analysis, in the conceptions of determinism and teleology, in the evaluation of science as an end in itself or as a means towards a further and far more worthy end.

The aim of St. Thomas, as I have tried to show, was an attempt to synthesize all knowledge in an ordered and related whole, in which the connexion of one part with another is shown to be inevitable. In that grandiose scheme science certainly has its place. That much of that ancient science must be rejected only means that we must synthesize anew, and bring into relation with our theology and philosophy—with those deeper and still valuable conceptions of change, and law and design in Nature—whatever truths the science of today may know, or the science of the future have in store for us.

[1] Morley, *English Writers*, Vol. III, p. 321. He is writing of Bacon. 'No part of that ground has yet been cut away from beneath the feet of students, although six centuries ago the Oxford friar clearly pointed out its character. We still make sheep-walks of second, third, and fourth and fiftieth hand references to authority; still we are the slaves of habit; still we are found following too frequently the untaught crowd; still we flinch from the righteous and wholesome phrase, "I do not know," and acquiesce actively in the opinion of others that we know what we appear to know. Substitute honest research, original and independent thought, strict truth in the comparison of only what we really know with what is really known by others, and the strong redoubt of ignorance has fallen.'

(2) St. Thomas and Psychology.

Nowhere, except perhaps in his Theodicy, does St. Thomas Aquinas rise to such a level of natural speculation as in his Psychology. In the group of problems and their solutions which constitute this science he follows once more in the main the guiding principles of Aristotle; but in more than one place he profoundly modifies, and even radically alters the teaching of the Greek philosopher. For in the view of Aquinas the study of man, and in especial the soul of man, which is at once the ground and source of all the manifold activities that constitute his life, is not a subject to be studied altogether apart from other manifestations of life in the universe. In his synthetic conception of Natural Science as the reflect of an absolutely ordered and regulated world, human psychology forms but a part. Man, its subject-matter, fits into his place in a magnificently conceived scheme, in which not only the lower sentient and vegetative forms of life, but also the vast multitude of incorporeal spirits constituting the celestial hierarchy—and even, in a sense, God himself—are included. Thus man, the microcosm, reflecting all Nature in his constitution and functions, is found, as it were, midway between the angels and the brutes; sharing the life of intelligence with the former, yet only able to rise to such a level of knowledge as is possible to him by reason of the physical and physiological organization upon which, both in its origin and in its exercise, all his mental life depends. The conception is a magnificent one—the fruit and crown alike of St. Thomas' synthetic power. In it we can trace elements

of vastly divergent systems of thought. There is Aristotle's masterly analysis of the powers manifested by the various operations of living creatures, and in particular by the operations peculiar to man alone. There are fragments and reminiscences of Plato's and St. Augustine's thought in the incommunicability and spirituality of individual human souls. There are echoes of the Neo-platonism of the *Divine Names* and *Celestial Hierarchy* of Pseudo-Denis. Above all there is the common Christian doctrine as to the origin and end of man. These often conflicting elements St. Thomas developes, adapts and harmonizes in such a way as to present a complete body of coherent doctrine as to the nature and mode of operation of the various kinds of beings whose life embraces both knowledge and desire—including even God—whose life, by way of analogy and negation, can be in some sense known by us.

It may seem strange to modern ways of thinking that St. Thomas should have cast his psychology into such a form; but it will not seem so strange if we remember his purpose in writing, which I set forth in the previous paper. And, indeed, though he begins with God, and treats of the angels before he comes to man in the *Summa Theologica*, yet all his conclusions as to the mode of psychological life of either God or the angels are based upon observations as to the psychological life of man. Though *a priori* in plan, his psychology is *a posteriori* in structure; and granted that God is what He is, and angels what they are, St. Thomas has every right to speculate as to the way in which they may know and will, basing his speculations upon human ways of knowing and willing, and drawing comparisons from

these. Indeed, his speculations as to the forms of consciousness of beings higher in the scale than man help us much to an understanding of the operations of the human mind itself.

But man, for Aquinas, is not a mere mind or soul. Notwithstanding the difficulties which it raises, St. Thomas was too good an Aristotelian not to recognize that the object of study in this matter is man, rather than the soul of man; or better still, individual men, rather than their souls. Yet, in studying the activities and functions of man, he discovers certain phenomena which he is unable to refer to, or explain by, any purely material principle. There is evidence of a certain spontaneous and immanent activity which is utterly unlike the reactions of matter. St. Thomas' physics in the broader sense led him to look upon human beings as compounded, indeed, of matter and form; since they, in common with inanimate objects, are subject to movement, change and alteration. Hence it is to form, or the constitutive formal principle which determines, and jointly with matter constitutes, the nature of the individual being under consideration, that these phenomena are to be attributed. And thus it comes about that Aquinas—in whose thought the individual man is not a soul *plus* a separate body, but one unique and essential entity—since he credits the human form with an operation pecular to itself, must allow it also some sort of nature, and even of existence, in its own right.

I need not pause to show how at this point the Aristotelian elements of his thought are struggling and fusing with the Platonic and Patristic, nor stress the deep underlying Platonism that leavens his peripatetic doctrine. It is enough to indicate the emerging of a

definitely psychological standpoint from which he can review, on the one hand, the activities (and thereby the powers) of the soul; and build up, on the other, a body of philosophical doctrine as to its source, its essential nature, and its end or destiny. If the distinction just drawn be allowed, we are here in presence of a psychology, in the truest sense of the term, as well as of a metaphysic of the human soul.

Modern psychologists neglect, on a methodological principle, the working out of the metaphysical implications of their empirical science; but after the long and arid attempt of Associationism and kindred theories to dispense altogether with it, the most modern and the best of them have swung back from this position, and still confess to the need of at least an hypothesis of the soul, or self, or mind, in order to justify their science.

The psychology proper of St. Thomas, then, has to do with the special activities and functions of the human soul considered, not so much in its aspect of form of the human being, as in that of its own, though incomplete, substantiality. These characteristic activities are its intelligence and rational desire; and they indicate the specific distinction that obtains between man and all the other animals. We may, for our present purpose, omit any detailed consideration of St. Thomas' treatment of the special senses and internal sensory powers, which are the presuppositions of intellect and will. These latter, the functions of which are worked out on Aristotelian lines, with the notable added elaboration of the *vis aestimativa* or *cogitativa* (an elaboration mainly due to Arabian influences) correspond roughly to the processes of perception, imagination, associative memory and instinct of current psychology.

In general Aquinas regards sensation as the psychic reaction of a subject to appropriate physical stimuli.

He does not, however, lose sight of the characteristic physiological aspect of sensory processes; but while making the organism the seat of sensation, he clearly distinguishes between its physiological and psychical factors. A similar distinction holds good for the appetitive powers other than the distinctively human will. What is important for us in his general theory of sensation is that St. Thomas extends its scope to explain also the higher processes of conceptual thought. For him all cognitive mental functions are conceived as operating in the same way. They are passive powers, either of the organism, or of the soul; that is, they are powers the nature of which is to act only when they are acted upon ('informed'); or, as we should say, to react to appropriate stimulation. Just as the external sense-object, acting upon the receptor organs through the physical changes that it brings about in the medium between it and them, causes the organism to react in sensing, according to its native constitution; just so does the soul react in knowing when it has been acted upon by its appropriate intellectual determinant.

St. Thomas has no epistemological difficulties to overcome. He had no doubt with regard to the existence of physical objects. For him these are really knowable and known to us in sensing; despite the admitted fact that the sensorial determinant, or *species sensibilis*, is the term of a complicated series of physical, physiological and psychical events which intervene between the actual object and our perception of it. Nor has he any reservation to make in his doctrine that what is really known in intellectual knowledge is the abstract reality

discoverable within and beneath the concrete and individual things of sense; though it was necessary here for him further to invoke the operation of an active power which Aristotle had placed outside the individual mind, and the neo-platonizing Averroes had identified with the intelligence of the moon. Thus, between conceptual thought and its object are interposed the modification of the medium by the object, the organic reaction in sensation and imagination, and the further reaction of the understanding intellect, together with the action of this faculty—the *intellectus agens*.

But, as has been said, St. Thomas was not preoccupied by problems of epistemology. The artificial postulate of method affecting some forms of modern psychology did not hamper him. His theory of thought is a purely psychological one, even if it is rational or transcendental rather than empiric. But the theory is, none the less, based upon empiric data.

It is presented in a dramatic form. The besouled organism is conceived of as placed over against realities which are capable of acting upon it; and it reacts, as we have seen, in perceiving, remembering and imaging individual things on the sensory level. But more than percepts, memories and images is to be discovered in mind. It is indubitable that general concepts are also to be found; and these have altogether peculiar relations to the percepts. Whence do they arise; since all that comes to us by way of the senses is concrete and located in a spatial and temporal order; since we have no direct apprehension of any individual reality which does not possess these characters?

The question is one which in one form or other had exercised thinkers from the very earliest times.

Cosmologically stated, it raises the problem which issued in the historic solutions of Heraclitus and Parmenides:—the essentially changing character of the world and all that is in it; the essentially fixed and stable character of a world in which nothing changes at all: a manifest contradiction. But the problem is here not a cosmological one; it is psychological. Not only are the percept and the image relatively fluid in themselves; but the external things we believe to exist are believed by us also to be mutable and transitory. Yet what we conceive is conceived precisely as *not* having these characters. The objects of conception are fixed and immutable; they are essences, species, natures. Within the mind itself the distinction is found; and it cannot be got rid of. How then account for the genesis of the concept, since all that is given in sensation is characteristically other than it?

St. Thomas states and considers the opinions of Democritus, Plato and Aristotle in this matter. He rejects the first as reducing intellectual knowledge to the plane of sensation; and the second on the ground that it leaves the causal character of the percept or image out of view. And he adopts what he considers to be the genuine theory of Aristotle, namely, that an active power of abstraction must be supposed,[1] by the operation of which the sensory 'images are made to be intelligible in act.'

[1] St. Thomas posits the *Intellectus Agens* because he cannot get on without it. Cf. *Summa Theologica*, I, 79, 3 and 4; also I, 84, 6; also *De Veritate*, q. X., art. 6. After considering other hypotheses relating to the origin of knowledge from things of sense, he writes: *Et ideo prae omnibus praedictis positionibus rationabilior videtur sententia Philosophi, qui ponit scientiam mentis nostrae partim ab intrinseco esse, partim ab extrinseco*, etc.

The parallel between intellection and sensation here becomes clear. Like the senses, the understanding is a passive power requiring an actuation from without in order that it should come into operation; but, unlike sense, it is in presence of no external object capable of acting upon it and thus provoking its reaction The level to which cognition can rise is so far only sensory. But cannot the percept, or the image, be dematerialized, stripped of its individualizing and limiting characters? If this were possible, the abstract concepts and universal ideas we undoubtedly possess could be accounted for. The hypothesis of the acting intellect is adopted to explain the possibility; and it is seen to be adequate to the observed facts.

When, by the operation of this abstractive faculty, the intellectual determinant has been extracted from the image and impressed upon it, the understanding can pass into act; and the mind can then function independently of all sense and all sensation. Indeed, it always does, and only can, so act. From this point it is able to progress intellectually in judgment and reasoning, and so proceed from truth to truth. But in the genesis of its thinking, there must always be images upon which the active intellect can work. Indeed, without an image we can never, according to St. Thomas, think at all; for images are the material out of which our concepts are drawn.

With this opinion of St. Thomas, based both on physiological considerations and on introspection (though recent introspective work would not seem to confirm it) two curious and important conclusions are bound up. First, since intellect can never operate without a turning towards images, the solidarity of the soul with the

organism is indicated. Angels may have the *intelligibilia* infused, and possess full knowledge from the outset. The brutes may never rise to understanding at all. Man can understand, but only by a series of progressions in acquiring knowledge; and, even then, only in so far as he shares the mental constitution of the lower animals. The soul of man is not a spirit only; it is the form of the human being.

This doctrine was one of the innovations of the new psychology of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and it may be asked how such a revolution from the current Augustinian platonism could possibly have been brought about. I have no space to enter at length into this point; but the change from the view that man was the soul using the body (Augustine) to the view that soul and body together as co-principles constitute the individual man (Aristotle) would seem largely to have been made possible by reason of the Christian teaching on the resurrection and its implications.

The second conclusion, no less important, is that all the powers required to explain mental life and its sequences are faculties belonging to the individual mind. One of the great philosophical polemics of Aquinas was waged upon this precise point. The acting intellect, no less than the understanding, is an endowment of the soul. Whatever Aristotle may have taught—and his teaching upon the matter is still disputed—the doctrine of the unity of the intellect (*i.e.*, that a unique intellect was shared by all human beings) was altogether anathema to St. Thomas. Each individual man is psychologically complete within himself, and needs no adventitious faculty which does not personally belong to him in order to explain his knowledge. The consequences of

this doctrine are easily seen to be momentous for any metaphysic of the soul.

The theory of the acting intellect, as presented by St. Thomas, is, as I have tried to show, adequate to account for those observed facts of the empirical psychology of cognition which cannot be accounted for by sensation. But it is not empirical psychology; and, therefore, must at least appear to be largely out of touch with modern views. For modern psychological thought prides itself on its empiricism. The acting intellect, as such, if it is anything, is transcendent to experience. Its function is not to know, or to be known; but, jointly with the image, to provide the stimulus to intellectual knowledge. We have no immediate cognizance of it, but only know it, if at all, in its effects; just as we know the laws of association or of contrast, for we certainly have no direct knowledge of these. But for all that, the laws of association and contrast have not been rejected by the empiricists; and it seems in reality a small matter whether we explain our empirical observations by a law or by a principle of reality.

Modern psychological thought, however, despite its protestations of empiricism, is not merely empiric. It is true that certain terms have been got rid of as implying doctrines which are no longer acceptable to science; soul, for instance, as connoting theological beliefs; substance, as meaning (which it certainly does not) an inert core into which attributes are plunged; and many others. But the realities signified by such terms cannot in fact be barred out of psychology; and the very author from whom I have taken the curious misrepresentation of substance just given, makes a very tolerable definition of it, and reintroduces the notion

into psychology under another name. Indeed, though souls, and even selves, have until recently been ignored by much modern scientific psychology; though faculties (equally with substance misunderstood) have been, and are yet, ruled out of court; both self, and faculty, and even soul have been brought back surreptitiously. We have subject, disposition, tendency, mind as distinguished from body, mental process as distinct from physiological. And even when, as in the ultra-physiological view, such dispositions and tendencies are in reality ascribed to the nervous system, when mind and mental process are regarded as products of the brain, it is only necessary to restate the matter in accurate terms in order to appreciate the grotesqueness of the doctrine. It is only with a *living* brain that we are conscious; it would seem, therefore, that some real principle of life is necessarily involved as the explanation of any form of consciousness whatever. But, further, any acquaintance we may have with physiological systems such as nerves and brain can be reached only by way of knowledge and inference. The brain must be in some way within knowledge to be known; and knowledge is admittedly not a physical process, but a psychical one. The factual character of the nervous system is thus guaranteed by the factual character of knowledge. The object is present *to* the subject and known by him. But it is absurd to suppose that a conglomerate of neurons can even spatially be present within itself, and *know* itself. The matter is admittedly an obscure and difficult one; but such terms as those to which reference has been made, if they mean anything at all, must refer to mind or soul, or else to the physiological organism precisely as besouled. And with this

last view, so far as it harmonizes with the unity of the individual, St. Thomas would have no quarrel. Instead, however, of raising epistemological difficulties, which they rarely if ever consider, against the exaggerated opinions of materialistic psychologists, it is more profitable to turn to positive evidence in favour of the older and more balanced conclusion of St. Thomas. Of late years there has been a widespread movement away from the associationism, mechanism, mental chemistry and mosaic-consciousness-psychology of the last century. This movement has originated principally in experimental investigations carried out in the increasingly many and important laboratories of psychology; and the schools of Würtzburg and Louvain have had no small part in this work. Researches into the processes of abstraction and generalization have shown that abstract concepts, capable of functioning as universals, are derived from percepts.[1] It is therefore perfectly legitimate to conclude in a mental power of abstraction and generalization. Though it is not for psychologists to take it, there is only one step further to be taken to pursue the clue into metaphysics and assert the existence, and deduce the nature, of the soul.

Indeed, some of the most modern experimental work that has been done in reality bears directly upon this last point. I refer in particular to introspective investigations, objectively controlled, upon will-process. A considerable number of such researches has been

[1] *Summa Theologica*, I, 79, 4. *Percipimus nos abstrahere formas universales a conditionibus particularibus.* Cf. also my *On the Consciousness of the Universal and the Individual*; Moore, *The Process of Abstraction*, University of California Publications; and F. C. Bartlett, *Some Problems of Perceiving and Imaging*, British Journal of Psychology, Vol. VIII, p. 222.

carried out with great thoroughness; and though investigators differ widely on minor points, there is already a mass of evidence in favour of the immediate awareness, in some one or other form of its activity, of the Self.

Now it is notorious that authors differ, according to their unconscious philosophical bias (and who is entirely without it?) as to the meaning of the term Self. Some mean, as St. Thomas does, the individual—body and soul. Others mean the soul, as St. Augustine has it, 'using the body.' Making allowance for this difference in the use of the term, and limiting the introspective evidence to that which is clearly not of physiological origin, there can be little doubt but that observers have reported a direct awareness of the Self in action. When carefully and critically observed by trained introspectors, this Self is immediately apprehended as a bare existent-doing-something, *i.e.*, attending, remembering, tending towards, determining, choosing, *etc.* Its nature is in no sense apprehended; its content is altogether minimal; and no one could describe it adequately, as it later on comes to be conceived, from any one apprehension of it. But the experience of it is altogether different from the experience of visceral, kinaesthetic or other physiological sensations; and can certainly be discriminated from such. It is something, given in experience, entirely *sui generis*; and no ingenuity of critics can reduce it to 'analysed' kinaesthetic sensations,[1] or explain it away.

[1] Cf. Wheeler, *An Experimental Investigation of the Process of Choosing*, University of Oregon Publications, 1920, 1, Nos. 2, 4; also *Analysed versus Unanalysed Experience*, Psychological Review, 1922.

St. Thomas, notwithstanding the *a priori* presentation of his doctrine, was perfectly aware of this: and his statement that the soul knows its existence in every one of its acts, but knows its nature, or essence, only by a subtle investigation of all its acts[1] gives us evidence of his rare introspective ability and psychological acumen.

This is not the place to bring forward in detail evidence for the immediate awareness of the soul of itself; but I may in this connexion quote from two important psychological works which have recently appeared. In his *Outline of Psychology* Professor McDougall[2] finds the subject of experience a necessary hypothesis for psychology. He will not allow it to be the brain, to substitute which for the mind, he says, leads us to absurd consequences. He leaves the question of dualism of mind and body to the metaphysicians; and though he does not explicitly assert any immediate awareness of it, he clearly and unhesitatingly teaches that 'whenever we refer to a fact of experience, we imply *some one* thinking of *some thing*.' Of greater experimental value is the deliberate adoption by Professor Spearman of the view that the notion of the *Ego* is to be attributed to direct experience'[3] In adopting this view Spearman associates himself with Ach and Ebbinghaus; and he might have added the names of many eminent psychologists to these. The peculiar value of the doctrines of these contemporary psychologists lies for us in this,

[1] *Summa Theologica*, I, 87, 1.

[2] Cf. also the same author's *Body and Mind*, p. 365. McDougall here takes the Cartesian, rather than the Thomistic viewpoint.

[3] Cf. Ach: *Ueber die Willenstätigkeit und das Denken*, and Lewin, *Das Problem der Willensmessung und das Grundgesetz der Association*, Psychologische Forschung, Bd. II, Heft 2.

that they emphasize the definite rejection of the mechanical and associationist view of mind, and involving Behaviourism also in their condemnation, point backwards towards a psychology which had been ridiculed by their not so very remote predecessors. Spearman, whose work is epoch-making for the science, makes one scathing comment in this section on 'The Ego.' It is this: 'Any psychology of cognition that fails to account for this universal apprehending of an *ego* must be disfigured by a gap so wide and so deep as to render it impotent to explain thoroughly the simplest event in either ordinary life or experimental procedure.' These two writers, both of high representative authority in contemporary psychology, indicate the really tremendous verging around of modern outlook if we compare their teaching with that of, say, Spencer, Bain or Lewes.

But their outlook is based upon facts. Not only have we the Self implied in the now established theory of volitional tendencies,[1] which are capable of breaking up no matter what, or how strong, a brute association of ideas, but we have, as I have said, a very large body of introspective evidence, gathered from a considerable number of experimental researches, to the effect that the Self is undoubtedly given in immediate awareness or intuition.

I need make no apology for having dealt with this subject at so great a length. It is crucial in psychology; and I think it is crucial also in the thought of St. Thomas.

But there is another point into which I must certainly go, even if very briefly. The whole of St. Thomas' ethical doctrine is dependent upon the view he takes of

[1] See preceding note.

the will. And the will, also, is a subject for research in contemporary psychology.

Many people look upon the understanding and the will as in the fable of the paralytic and the blind man. The understanding knowingly directs, the will blindly executes. This is 'faculty psychology' in a really indefensible form; in which the intelligence is conceived as one entity giving information to another; upon which the will reacts in doing something, *i.e.*, in a causal manner. St. Thomas held no such view. In his thought will, like the understanding, is a power of the soul; and both, according to his statement,[1] mutually include each other. But 'powers' are in reality properties; and, though for St. Thomas they are both distinct from each other and from the substance of which they are the powers, they of necessity imply that substance. It is the substance, then, or in this case the person, that by the intellect understands and by will chooses and decides. And choice and decision are adhesions of the individual to some object, or course of action, presented to him as desirable. This doctrine brings will into the general scheme of the appetites, which are radical inclinations of the nature towards their appropriate objects. St. Thomas did not hold the modern tripartite division of consciousness into cognition, conation and affection; and for him feeling is certainly not the necessary cause of volition. Rather is it a modality of the cognitive-conative couple on the sensorial level. Nevertheless, though rational will is classed among the appetites, its *object* is quite different from that of all the rest. This is no less than the good in general; whereas theirs is some one particular, and thereby

[1] *Summa Theologica*, I, 16, 4 ad 1.

more or less, good here and now apprehended as desirable. By this it is not meant that will acts, as it were, *in vacuo*, adheres to no concrete end, or elects no particular course of action in order to obtain it. On the contrary, will, moving the organism through the other appetitive powers, always issues in definite and concrete acts. But it is in acts apprehended under the common notion of good. The distinction is a similar one to that made between the objects of sense and of intellect, which was worked out earlier in this paper; and it emphasizes the dual aspect in which man may be regarded; solicited, as he is on the one hand, like the brute animals, by sensible objects, yet able to choose, like the angels, between good and evil. There is one good, towards which, however, by nature man is orientated, and in respect of which he is not free. This is the absolute good; which is, in fact, no less than God himself. And it is because no creatures can be absolutely good that choice in their regard is possible. Will stands at the head of all the sensory appetites, the movements of which are subordinated to it; and its especial function is to determine, after rational deliberation, the particular ends which shall be consciously aimed at or accomplished by the individual. It is thus apparent that choice is to a large extent an intellectual process which is terminated by volitional assent,[1] just as simple volition is the acceptance by the individual of a consciously presented end, or unique course of action. What is important here to note is the fact that the operations of both intellect and will, considered abstractly, are of themselves entirely impartial and cold, utterly unlike the operations of the sensory appetites with which they

[1] *Ibid.*, I, 83, 3.

are in intimate connexion. These latter are called by St. Thomas 'passions,' and are organic. Once more the distinction between the acts of the organism and the acts of the soul emerges in his theory of will.

Enough has already been said in the body of this paper to indicate the essential similarity between the doctrine of St. Thomas on volition and the results of the most modern and experimental introspective analysis of consciousness. No doubt, while the latter remains on the descriptive plane, the former is explanatory and 'rational.' But it is a rational psychology of will based clearly upon the observation of facts; and at the same time one into which the recent experimental data quite naturally fit. The careful observations that of late years have been made upon voluntary choice have established the close interrelation of cognitive and conative processes. They have shown the occurrence, on the cognitive side, of imagery, concepts, judgments and the like; and on the conative, of tendencies, actions, acceptances, decisions, and so on. Phenomena of this nature are found both on the sensorial and the conceptual level in acts of choice. At a certain point in the process a transition from cognitive to conative mentation has been observed to take place; and this—whether occurring as a phenomenal 'consciousness of action,' or, as I prefer to designate it, as a direct consciousness of the Self-in-act, issuing its *fiat* to its executive powers—there can be no doubt is our consciousness of will.

With regard to freedom modern scientific psychology has, for the most part, nothing to say; for it is generally understood that its method shuts out the problem from consideration. Some Self-psychologists, however, claim

that free causal volition is a datum of consciousness,[1] and, as such, has the same validity as any other datum. Most of the consideration and arguments raised against freedom are of the nature of prejudices imported from the postulates of the physical sciences or from materialistic philosophy; and can thus have no real bearing on a science which studies immediate awareness itself. There is admittedly a universal belief in the freedom of human acts; and a very reasonable theory is provided by St. Thomas by which this belief can be explained and justified. If anything, the experimental evidence points in the direction of his theory; for there are cases of choice in which one motive is reported as becoming predominant over another because of a strengthening of its objective value by a reference to self, or the system of self-regarding sentiments, or by a direct intervention of the self. 'Les motifs sont mes motifs,' has been well remarked by an eminent philosopher. 'Some motives are motives *only* because they are mine,' is an observation of introspection. This fact was noted in the research of Boyd Barrett.[2] It comes out clearly in some (yet unpublished) work from my own laboratory. And I understand that Ach has promised experimental evidence of freedom, which in all likelihood will be of a similar character.

The whole question of the orectic processes has been avoided by most modern experimental psychologists. They are less obvious than cognitive processes, far more difficult to observe, and intimately tangled up with debatable philosophical problems. None the less, the

[1] Cf. Maher, *Psychology*, p. 406.

[2] *Motive-force and Motivation-tracks*, by Boyd Barrett (Pieters, Louvain).

belief in freedom has to be accounted for; and what evidence we have points in one direction, while no direct evidence can be adduced against it.

From the foregoing brief remarks, necessarily limited to one or two topics, it will be seen that the psychology of St. Thomas is in closer touch with modern thought than is his physical science. Most of his physics has gone, and been replaced by something else. But there are many matters with regard to which psychologists appear to be returning from their painstaking empirical analyses towards a position at which, in its general features, no synthesis more than his is likely to be acceptable. The wheel of thought has turned and come round full cycle in these seven hundred years. Modern psychology is once again almost ready for its synthesis. Modern philosophy, until that synthesis is made, will remain in its deplorable state of chaos. And modern science still awaits the interpreter who will relate it in the 'whole' of human knowledge. It is in psychology that the master-key to all the problems must be looked for; but it is a hand guided by a mind such as was that of St. Thomas Aquinas that must turn that key, and, opening the doors, let the light of day into the dark chambers of our modern thought.

V.

THE MORAL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF ST. THOMAS.

By the Rev. Michael Cronin, D.D., M.A.

(1) The Moral Philosophy of St. Thomas.

(*a*) *The End of Man.*

I am sure it will come as a surprise to many Englishmen, particularly non-Catholics, to hear that St. Thomas' ethical system is a natural science and not a part of theology; that it is based on purely natural principles derived from reason and observation, just like mathematics, physics, chemistry or physiology. When we think of St. Thomas we generally picture him as a religious and a saint, and therefore we find it hard to dissociate his name from theology, and even from some kind of mysticism. particularly in the domain of morals. Very many, too, are acquainted with his works only at second hand, and you know that modern authorities are often wholly unreliable as exponents of the great mediaeval scholastic. Herbert Spencer, for instance, showed amazing ignorance as well as amazing carelessness when he wrote that 'religious creeds, established and dissenting, all embody the belief that right and wrong are right and wrong simply in virtue of divine enactment.' So far as I am acquainted with scholasticism, there is not the slightest foundation for the assertion. *Quaedam mala quia prohibita, quaedam*

prohibita quia mala ('some things are evil because forbidden, some forbidden because evil') is a commonplace of mediaeval ethics with which even Herbert Spencer ought to have been acquainted. Again, some are misled by the very nature of the doctrines with which St. Thomas' name is associated. For instance, we find that he places the final end of man in another world from this, in fact in God Himself; and naturally people ask, is not a system that represents God as the final end, by that very fact confessedly theological? And yet, I submit, his theory of Ethics is essentially a theory of natural morals: his principles are natural principles, based on an examination of our natural faculties; the criterion by which he distinguishes right from wrong is likewise natural—indeed I might say it is of the earth earthly—whilst even for his doctrine of the final end he looks not to theology but to psychology, it is a conclusion based on the known facts and implications of our human constitution.

This appeal to the natural order as the basis of human morals confronts us in all his ethical treatises—his Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle, the third book of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the first and second volumes of the *Quaestiones Disputatae*, and finally the *Prima Secundae* and *Secunda Secundae* of the *Summa Theologica*—in all these he approaches the subject of good and evil by an examination of the psychology of the human will, and he begins by introducing us to some very simple conclusions. He finds that in every deliberate human act we aim at some end: whether we walk or study or plough a field, we aim at the attainment of some object—health, exercise, knowledge, riches, honour. He finds, too, that to each little series

of acts there is some end bringing the series to a close, the final end of that series. We study in order to get information, and we look for information so as to pass an examination, so that thereby we may be assured a position in life. Our series of will-acts, you see, must commence somewhere, and we commence with the end. All this is but plain common sense. There is no philosophy in it, no speculation of any kind: it is what everybody who thinks must fully recognize.

From this point, however, we begin to find ourselves in deeper waters, where for solid footing we require the guidance of reason and the guarantee of assured science, for the problem that immediately follows is one that lies outside the range of mere common sense, and from the very nature of the terms employed belongs entirely to philosophy. It is the old-world problem whether there is any end which is final absolutely, an end to which all human action is directed, the end not only of this or that little series of means, but of all particular means and all particular ends, the *teleiotaton* of Aristotle, the end of human life itself. Remember we are not making any call on theology here; we are not asking whether there is any being, in or out of the world, to which on account of its supreme excellence or supreme authority everything else is subject, and to which therefore everything serves as means. That indeed would be a question essentially for the theologian. St. Thomas, however, is engaged with the problem, not of the claims of God as against his creatures, but with that of the objects of our desires, and the question is, whether there is any end to which the will naturally and necessarily directs all, any end which is an end for the whole sum of human desires, and which brings the will

to complete rest. That is the problem of the final end as treated in Ethics, and it is evidently a problem the solution of which belongs ultimately to psychology.

Now to those who have made even a brief study of the psychology of the human will there is one point which at once suggests itself as an obvious feature of all will-activity, and that is, that in the will we are dealing with a faculty which is not easily satisfied. The range of object subtended by our will is exactly co-extensive with that presented to our intellects. We can wish or will anything that we can think, and thought, even human thought, as you know, extends to very wide horizons indeed. In our thought we can survey, not only the wide earth around us and the heavens above us, to which even some of the senses extend, but also worlds of being that are outside the range of the senses altogether, the world of immaterial things, like the virtues and law, the unextended forces that move the universe, the angels, the world of possible things that may never become actual, all being in fact, and not only finite being but the infinite itself. Any or all of these things may be made the object of our thought, and therefore of our wills also, for, as I said, there is nothing that a man can think of that he may not also will. And since the final end of the will cannot be anything narrower than its own range of object—if it were it could not be final, it could not bring the will to rest, and that is what the final end must do—so there is no finite object or group of objects that can constitute our final end. In this way we are led to look for the final end of man in the infinite good.

In St. Thomas the argument is much severer and more technical than this. It is something of this sort.

The end of the will is the good-in-general, just as the object of the intellect is the true-in-general. You may take it that he had proved this proposition in his psychology. Now this conception of the good-in-general is one that cannot be exhausted by any finite good or group of finite goods. They cannot therefore be our final end. Finite things cannot satisfy a faculty the essential and ever-present object of which is so much wider than they. But the infinite satisfies our will because it contains all possible good, all the good that we can desire; therefore it is our end. That is St. Thomas' exact position, and that, no doubt, is in outline the form our argument should take had we time to develop it fully. But in these lectures it is possible to indicate only the broad features of St. Thomas' teaching, and I believe the understanding is that we are to keep as far away as possible from technicalities.

I should like, however, even at the risk of seeming prolix, to bring out two very important features of St. Thomas' reasoning. One is, that in his system the end of man is determined by argumentation based on the conditions necessary for satisfying the will or exhausting its full potency. Now I want you to notice that that is also the method followed in all the other natural sciences dealing with the functions or ends of things. In physiology, for instance, that will be regarded as the end of an organ which fills up the measure of its potencies. The end of the heart is to send the blood coursing through the veins, for that is the full extent of its capacity. If it could attain a wider object than this, that wider object would be its end. So also whatever exhausts the potency of the will must be its end. And the end of the will is also the end of man,

since there is no object of any faculty in man that the will cannot make its own.

A second feature of St. Thomas' reasoning (and the matter is important from the point of view of recent criticisms) is this: his reasoning is all reasoning in pure psychology. It is reasoning based on the nature of man, on our human constitution, on man as he is, not on man as he might be or perhaps man as, in the view of some, he ought to be. I say this because there are persons who profess dissatisfaction with any theory that would place the final end of man outside of this world, no matter what the requirements or the implications of our natural constitution. Now that is a position which I find it hard to understand, and I may add that, from the point of view of science, it is an utterly indefensible position. For even the most exacting positivist will admit that, in determining the ends and functions of organs or faculties, a scientist must always take things as he finds them. If then man is possessed of a faculty that subtends a wider object than anything in this finit world, we ought, as scientific men, to accept that fact. The fault, if fault there be, is with nature: but the fact is also a fact of nature. It is open of course to any one to complain that God has made us what we are: but the fact that we are so made has to be accepted. The husbandman may complain that the end of his labour in the springtime is not to be attained here and now, but in a different season. A physiologist, if he were unreasonable enough, might express surprise that the object of vision is removed from the organ of vision by thousands of miles, in fact by distances measured in terms of worlds. But the facts, whatever they may be, he will accept, for the simple reason tht he is a scientific

man. So there may be disappointment amongst persons of a certain mentality that our minds are what they are, that our end is what it is, that it is outside of the world, but the fact remains that though our bodies are circumscribed in space and time, our intellects and wills are subject to no such limitations. 'I could be bounded in a nutshell,' said the poet, 'and still be king of infinite space.' So, then, has the Creator willed to make us that the finite cannot satisfy us: and therefore it is not our end. 'Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord,' says St. Augustine, 'and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.'

The preceding discussion relates exclusively, as you will notice, to the objective final end, or the thing to which our wills are finally directed. I have said nothing to you about our subjective end, or the act by which the objective end is attained, and, when attained, is possessed and enjoyed. The act of possession differs according to the nature of the object possessed. Money, food, clothing, a house, knowledge—are all ends to be attained, but attainment or possession consists of a different act in each case. As to the question, what is the act constituting the attainment of the final end, I can say very little at present; and if I confine myself to stating that it will be an act of the speculative intellect, I hope you will not expect me to do any more. In a lecture like the present it is possible only to consider a few of the leading problems, and these only in the briefest fashion.

It is quite possible that some of those attending the Summer School are more interested in literature than in the technicalities of psychology and ethics, and for

their sake I should like to mention that the doctrine of the final end which I have been expounding for you is one which touches the human heart very closely, and therefore it is bound to find frequent and varied expression in the more reflective forms of literature, those especially which aim at being expositions of human feeling, of human desires, regrets, dissatisfactions, and of the other kindred experiences of our inner life. Let me quote a few passages which you will find strangely reminiscent of St. Thomas' teaching, even though the setting and the terminology are widely different from that to which we are accustomed in philosophy. 'I find man everywhere,' says Schopenhauer, 'a burlesque of what he should be,' an evident reference to the disproportion between promise and achievement which must always arise in the case of one whose powers cannot attain their end in the world in which he is compelled to live. 'Oh to be indeed a god,' writes Walt Whitman in his *Song of Joys*. He has been enumerating the various worldly pleasures, and one by one he finds them wanting. Then there is that beautiful little poem of George Herbert which some of you have read, *The Pulley*, in which the Creator is described as placing before men the plentitude of His gifts but reserving just one, and that the best of all—rest.

> For if I should, said He,
> Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
> He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
> And rest in nature, not the God of nature,
> So both should losers be.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
> If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
> May toss him to My breast.

I put with it Conrad Aiken's longer poem recently written, *The Pilgrimage of Festus*, in which the poet describes certain ineradicable dissatisfactions and the cravings consequent on them, and then 'the cry of the finite for the infinite' in which they culminate. More philosophical and argumentative, and therefore more valuable as an adjunct to Ethics, are many of Browning's poems, *e.g.*, *Pauline*:

> And thus I know
> This earth is not my sphere,
> For I cannot so narrow me
> But that I still exceed it.

It is literally the argument I have been developing from St. Thomas.

In your reading you will often come across passages of a similar nature, and they would be worth bringing together. For the problem is of immense practical importance in the moral life of man. The desire of the will for the final end may lead to very different psychological results in the consciousness of different men. But in all, even the most worldly, it must at times awaken one common feeling, that of a certain aristocratic aloofness from the world, as something foreign to our nature and inferior to us and to the things which constitute our rightful natural inheritance. It is a feeling that may be suppressed for a time, but it can never be wholly eradicated. It is one of nature's chief incentives to good. Indeed, it is her last guarantee that, even if all else were to fail, the human race can never become wholly bad or wholly absorbed in the vanity of perishable things.

(*b*) *Goodness and Duty.*

From the problem of the end of man St. Thomas passes on to that of goodness. And here we find ourselves back to technicalities again. You will already have noticed that in speaking of the ends of human action I sometimes substituted the word *good* for *end*, as if the two notions were interchangeable, and you may have wondered why. But in St. Thomas' system the two notions *are* interchangeable, as indeed they must be in any system genuinely aiming at a philosophy of the good. The object of the intellect is the true. The object of the will we speak of as the good, and our whole discussion in ethics is about this object, whatever the name we give it. Also, in all our actions we tend to something which helps to perfect us, *aliquid conveniens*. But the good is identical with the perfection of anything. Therefore the good and the end are one. There are a number of arguments to the same effect which you will find in the *Summa contra Gentiles* (III. 3), and with which I shall not trouble you at present.

But I should like to point out to you two things by way of indirect argument, and it is important to be in a position to do so, first, that in identifying these two conceptions, the end and the good, St. Thomas has the support of common usage or the speech of ordinary man, and secondly, that he has the support of all the schools of philosophy—there is one apparent exception (it is only apparent) of which I shall say something to you presently.

In ordinary conversation do we not speak indifferently of the good and the end? A house is good if it is a suitable means to its end, which is, I suppose,

comfortable living; a good golf driver is one which attains the special end for which it is constructed; a knife is good that cuts—this being its primary end.

That is the common or popular conception of goodness—the good and the end are one. Would you allow me to develop it to a slight extent before going further? For there is a great deal in it that is of genuine scientific value for our present subject.

In the examples which I have just given, you will notice that the kind of goodness which is predicated of things is what is known as hypothetical or conditional goodness, in the sense that a thing is good for this or that. A knife is good for cutting, a horse for racing. In respect of some other end these things might not be good. A surgeon's knife if not sterilized may be good for cutting: but it is not good, on the contrary, it is bad, in respect of its ulterior and more important end to which cutting is only a means, *viz.*, the health of the patient. It is bad absolutely as an instrument of surgery. And so you see it is always possible for us to suspend our judgment about the goodness of things, until we take account of all the ends they are supposed to subserve. At any period we may say of a thing that it is good for this or that, but we cannot say that it is good absolutely until we take account of the final end of the series of which it forms a part. And that is the sense in which we speak of a man as good and of his act as good. A human act is good, not merely good for this or that, but good simply, good absolutely, when it harmonizes with, or leads to, not this or that end, but the final end of man.

We have here almost the full connotation of the idea of moral goodness. To be morally good a thing must

be good simply, and therefore must lead to the final end. But in moral goodness there is something more. We cannot speak of a man as morally good by reason of his acts, if these acts are not his own: and they are not his own unless he is their proper cause: and he is not their proper cause unless he determines himself to them; and to determine oneself to one's act is freedom. *Liberum*, says St. Thomas, *est causa sui*. These are very technical conceptions, but there is no opportunity to develop them in a lecture of this kind. The moral good, then, of human action is the same as the good of other things, the good knife, the good machine, or what we call generic goodness. But it adds on two limiting conditions. An act is *morally* good if it leads, not to any end, but to the final end, and provided also it is free.

I told you also that, in identifying the good with the end, St. Thomas has the support of all the great masters of Ethics. 'The good,' says Aristotle, 'is that for which anything is done': *οὗ χάριν τὰ λοιπὰ πράττεται.* And the final good is that which is desirable not as a means merely but for its own sake: *εἰ δή τι τέλος ἐστὶ τῶν πρακτῶν ὃ δι' αὐτὸ βουλόμεθα, τἆλλα δὲ διὰ τοῦτο, καὶ μὴ πάντα δι' ἕτερον αἱρούμεθα, δῆλον ὡς τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη τἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἄριστον.*

Hedonists and Utilitarians also of every age, and in their own several ways, all identify the good with the end attained by human action, though they are not all agreed as to what that end is. Hegelians even, though far removed from the Aristotelian tradition, make of the two notions a common category. 'Morality,' says Mr. Bradley, 'implies an end in itself.' I said there was one apparent exception, and of course Kant's name

will at once suggest itself to your minds. In our elementary text-books on Ethics it is often stated that in Kant's system moral goodness is not in any way dependent on the notion of end, even the final end. But those who have taken the trouble to read his work on the Practical Reason through to its close are aware that this statement is quite misleading. Kant certainly begins his enquiry into the nature of morality without reference to the ends of action: but when he reaches the great central problem of his system we find that the end assumes the same importance, in fact, is given the same dominating position, as in every other form of Ethics. What are those acts, he asks, which it is open to us to desire as universal laws, and are therefore morally good (in his own phraseology—what are those acts that are capable of falling under the categorical imperative)? They are those acts, he answers, which harmonize with our chief appetites[1]: and, as you know, an appetite is nothing more than an innate tendency to some end. You will agree with me therefore that Kant is no exception to the tradition that identifies these two notions of the 'end' and the 'good.' On the contrary I regard Kant as affording valuable and even demonstrative proof that in any genuine ethical system the two conceptions are not to be dissociated.

In his view, therefore, of what it is that constitutes the radical element in goodness St. Thomas has on his

[1] To be more precise, his first answer is—they are those acts that we are able to think as universal—the thought of which as universal is not self-contradictory. Finding, however, that such a test leads nowhere, since there are very few acts (to my mind, no act) that we may not think as universal, he then returns the answer given above. For a fuller discussion on the subject see my own work on *Ethics*, Vol. I, appendix.

side the intuitive thought and traditional usage of ordinary men, and the support of practically all, if not absolutely all, the schools. I do not of course contend that the best test of the value of any system is to be found in the width of acceptance, even the educated acceptance, that happens to be accorded to it. A system is valuable by reason of its own inner truth, and independently of how it is received either by the man in the street, or by the philosopher. But in a lecture like this, where time is limited, it is useful to be able to point to a certain unanimity of opinion in favour of any theory or principle. It saves one from the necessity of prolix and difficult discussions, which in the circumstances would hardly be helpful, and might even be found most trying to your patience.

I want you now to look at the idea of the good from another standpoint (it has been spoken of by some writers as the metaphysical standpoint) to which I am led by the argument that I have just been developing. Perhaps I had better introduce it by way of a difficulty. It may have occurred to you that, in identifying the good with the end, St. Thomas has somehow managed to place the principle of goodness outside of things instead of within them, the end being as a rule something external to the agent; and that therefore St. Thomas' system falls very far short of other theories, *e.g.*, Hegel's, which have been spoken of as metaphysical, in which the goodness of things is represented as within those things, as identical with their being in fact, and not as constituted by ends or objects without. These metaphysical theories, it is said, are more in accordance with the ordinary notions of men and with philosophy

proper, for goodness is certainly of the nature of a perfection of some kind, and the perfections of things are wholly within those things, and as it were something of their very substance: what is outside an object does not perfect it in any way.

In answer to this criticism I should like to put before you a line of reasoning to be found in St. Thomas, in which the conception of inner goodness and inner perfection is developed, and developed not in spite of, but as a natural corollary to the view I have put before you, that the end and the good are one. I think his argument will be found to be metaphysical enough in all conscience to satisfy the most exacting of philosophers, and of high practical value also, a thing which cannot always be said of the opposed theories. The end, says St. Thomas, and the good are one. But all being is an end. An end to what? To the thing itself which possesses that being; for there is nothing that does not seek its own maintenance, its own continued existence. And hence, he concludes, all being is good. It is not always easy to know when we are up against a really important position in any science; but I may say to you that we are here dealing with a conclusion of tremendous import, not only in ethics but in philosophy as a whole. And yet you see how simply it is presented to us by St. Thomas—a simple conclusion from a very simple premiss. Here is the same conclusion given us by a well known modern thinker, one far removed from the tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas:—'The tendency to persevere in life,' writes M. Guyau, 'is a necessary law of life, not of human life only, but of all life.' He might have added 'and of all being also,' for the very same force that compels the plant

to develop its life will be found to move organic things also to resist their own disruption, as is evident from the fact that force has always to be applied if disruption is to be effected.

Let us, however, continue St. Thomas' argument. The principle that all being is good carries with it the corollary that good is fulness of being, or, the more being the more good. This does not mean that you have only to add on being of any kind to an object in order to increase its perfection. Good is fulness of being in the sense of fulness of natural being, or the being naturally proper to a thing. A thing is good when it has all its parts, and all up to nature's standard, and you will agree that more than this would not be good. You do not look for beautiful plumage in a stallion, nor for a stallion's strength in the dove. To add being of that kind to anything, being that is wholly foreign to its nature, would be to mar its perfection, not to enhance it. I may be permitted to quote Browning once more:

> Is the creature too imperfect, say,
> Would you mend it
> And so end it?
> Since not all addition perfects aye.

Applying this to men, we find that the good man is the man that is wholly up to nature's standard, and he is brought to nature's standard by the attainment of the natural objects of his faculties, whether these objects lie within him or without him. After all, in what other way is it possible for anything to be brought to nature's standard? Some of these objects are certainly without us, and some are within. But it is the natural objects of our faculties, wheresoever they

lie, that bring a man, as they bring other living things, to their perfection, and not to perfection in incomplete measure, but to his final perfection—his final end. The acts by which these ends are reached are good: and they are morally good when they are done under our own control, as I have already stated when dealing with the conditions of moral goodness.

You will see from this that the good, although identical with the end, is not to be regarded as wholly outside of things.

I think this will be quite enough on the conception of goodness as such.

But those of you who have come into close contact with the modern world will recognize that it is just here that we enter the great arena where all the battles are fought, where stand arrayed the two great forces into which the human race has always been divided, and into which it always will divide, two forces either always fighting or always armed for the fray, on the one hand the protagonists of moral law and moral discipline, on the other hand the advocates of moral nihilism, of revolutionary freedom, of ethical anarchy, to whom all law is oppression and the assertion of law an impudent imposition, a subversion in fact of that freedom which, they tell us, is certainly ours, whatever be the source from which it has sprung—be it God-given or devil-given, they say, makes no matter to them.

You have met such people, I am sure, in ordinary life. I certainly have met them. If the good and the end are one, they ask (for all men instinctively start out with this as principle), then how can any end be bad? May a man not do what he wishes? Or is not all good a purely

relative thing, dependent on one's present interest, the thing that suits a man for the moment, the thing that he just happens to desire? 'There's nothing good or bad,' writes the great poet, 'but our imagination makes it so.' In other words, how can there be permanent natural distinctions of good and evil?

Their second question is more revolutionary still—even if there are such distinctions, why should a man bother about them? If I am free to choose between good and evil, why should I choose the good? 'The great releasing question,' as Mr. H. G. Wells calls it, 'then why may I not have a good time?'

These are questions I should like to enter into very fully, but you will understand that my time is limited: and if I seem to treat them with a certain triteness and cold formality, it is not that I am not conscious of their great importance.

The question whether there are permanent natural distinctions of good and evil, distinctions that are independent of our momentary desires of momentary passion and caprice, is fully treated by St. Thomas, and moreover it is placed by him in its right perspective as essentially dependent on another problem, a problem that belongs more to psychology than to ethics, whether there are in men permanent natural tendencies or appetites, and needs dependent on the appetites, needs therefore that are inseparable from our human nature. If there are such appetites and such needs in man, then there are objects which are always ends for man, no matter how our wills may resist them for the moment, and these objects will be always good. There are, of course, laws to be observed in the attaining of these objects. Though food is good, still we must not eat too much. But as

a natural object of a natural appetite food, regarded in itself, is good.

Now that there are in man a number of natural appetites with their corresponding natural objects, may be shown in a variety of ways, only a few of which can be hinted at here. There are appetites, says St. Thomas, following Aristotle (you see the problem is as old as philosophy itself), that must exist in all men, and all, or nearly all animals. Such appetites must be natural. Some of these, as Leslie Stephen, one of the great natural philosophers of the evolutionist school, declares, must have been in men, and more particularly in animals, from the beginning, since otherwise the species could not have survived a generation. Examples are the appetite for continued existence, for food, for life, for the species, for the care of offspring.

Secondly, there are certain appetites that are allied to natural organs, and without which the organ could could not function. The stomach, for instance, is natural, but without an allied appetite for food, as is most evident in the case of animals, the stomach could not come by the materials which constitute its essential object and are necessary for the exercise of its function. This appetite, therefore, like the organ to which it is naturally attached, must be natural.

Thirdly, there is that splendid argument in St. Thomas in which, taking a wide survey of all classes of being and their divergent attributes, he points out that everything in nature has its dynamic as well as its static side. From which it follows that corresponding to every kind of perception, which is a static power, there are dynamic appetites each distinct from the other, and natural as our powers of perception are

natural. There are, therefore, certain natural appetites corresponding to our vegetative life, others corresponding to sense apprehension, and finally, the will, corresponding to the static faculty of intellectual knowledge.

I need not follow the controversy further. What I have said will show you that underneath the superficial changeable activity of our daily lives there is discoverable a great imposing array of appetites, of God's own making, whereby men are made to move to the things of chief moment for their lives. God has not left the pursuit of the great important ends to chance, to our own capricious choice, or even to cold logic discerning the means necessary for life and development. Though He leaves us free, He still moves us to certain objects, not indeed immediately but mediately, or through the natural appetites, and to these appetites he has attached special pleasures, in order that men may not neglect their exercise, and so fail to obtain the things that are necessary for human welfare. I know there is danger of some misunderstanding here, and I would ask you to be on your guard against it. The natural appetites are not to be exercised in any way and under any circumstances, as if there were no laws governing their use. Their legitimate exercise is dependent on very definite conditions, and these conditions are deducible from the ends to which the appetites in the scheme of nature are essentially directed. This you can easily understand from the simple example that I have already given you. We may eat, but only in such a way as is compatible with health, this being the natural end of the natural appetite for food. The subject of the natural law is complex and difficult, and I cannot treat of it here,

though I hope to say a few words about it before the lecture ends. What, however, I have been trying to bring out is a very simple thing, *viz.*, that there are in man natural appetites, natural permanent tendencies to certain objects, and that consequently some objects are naturally and intrinsically good.

The second question—that of duty—constitutes only a very small portion of one article of the *Summa Theologica*, and in this St. Thomas' attitude is in marked contrast to that of most modern writers. In our modern text-books the subject of duty is treated at greater length than any of the other great fundamental problems of ethics. To St. Thomas it seemed to be a problem that solved itself, once the idea was established of the final end as adequate object of the will, an object, therefore, which the will of its own inner nature was compelled to desire. May I make appeal by way of argument to a simple analogy? We may ask, for instance, why one should assent to a certain proposition in Euclid; and the answer is, because of the proposition immediately preceding. But why should that be accepted as true? Because of some other proceeding. And so on, until, finally, we are brought back to the axioms. If asked why these should be accepted, our answer is that they are accepted because they cannot be doubted. Our intellect is fixed on them by nature, and there is no refusing our assent to them. Now this is exactly the position which the will occupies in relation to the ends of action, and to that position appeal is made by St. Thomas in the *Prima Secundae* q. 94. art. 2—the only place in which the question of the proof of duty comes before him in a formal manner. The speculative intellect, he tells us, has as its first object being, and therefore it must give

its assent to the first speculative axiom that is founded on this conception (it cannot help doing so), *non est simul affirmare et negare* ('it is impossible at the same time to affirm and deny'). So also, he says, the will is fixed on the good, the good-in-general, and therefore, the practical intellect cannot but accept the proposition, 'the good is to be done.'

His argument may be presented in some such form as this. I must do *a*, if I am to obtain *b*, to which it leads. Well, a person may ask; what if I do not want *b*? Why must it be desired? and the answer is, because without *b* I cannot gain *c*, to which it leads. But what if I do not wish *c*? In this way the chain of means and ends is bound to extend until we come to the final end. And the position then is—I must wish *a* and *b* and *c* if I want to gain the final end. If, at this point, the former question is repeated—what if I do not want the final end?—the answer then becomes available that brings the whole discussion to a close: You *do* want the final end, you cannot help wanting it, for, from its very nature the will is fixed on it, so that to refrain from desiring it is psychologically impossible.

That is St. Thomas' theory of the natural ground of duty. Duty is, of course, like other necessities of nature, founded ultimately on God—the Author of nature. But, like other necessities, it has a secondary cause also, a natural foundation in things, and I ask—what deeper natural foundation is to be looked for than the inner nature of the will itself, and that inner irresistible necessity with which the will elicits its own primary act, the desire for the final end? I know of many attempts to solve this question of the natural ground of duty. But I know of none so complete, none so satisfying, from

the point of view of pure science, as that given by St. Thomas.

(c) *The Fundamental Criterion.*

After our discussion on the good and duty it will not be necessary to trouble you with a lengthy disquisition on the criterion. In ethics we need a criterion, some test by which to distinguish those acts that lead to the final natural end, and are good, from those that lead away from it. and are bad, Now, from what has been said you should have no difficulty in fixing on the primary or fundamental criterion, at all events. It consists of the natural objects of our natural faculties, and the principle to which it immediately gives rise is, that no faculty should be used except in such a way as leads to the attainment of its natural end. A man should eat and drink in a way consonant with health, for that is the end aimed at, that is the natural purpose of our faculty of eating and drinking. The maintenance of the race is the end of another faculty, and is also the governing condition of its use. The primary criterion is sustained by others known as secondary criteria; which also are of immense importance in the science of ethics; and they too are freely used by St. Thomas, *e.g.*, the effects of a particular line of action, or the instinctive acceptance of a particular belief by men of different nations. I have not time to draw out these secondary criteria for you, much less to discuss them in detail: in any case, you will find them in any up-to-date text-book on ethics. I should like, however, to give you one example of the primary criterion which will not only be useful as showing how to apply it in a particular case, but will also, I think, be found interesting on its own

account as constituting one of the chief, as it certainly is one of the most practical problems of ethical science. I refer to the question of divorce.

The law of all natural institutions is determined by their end. Eating and drinking are for health and life, and therefore the law is—so to eat and drink as to promote health and life. The law of marriage is determined in the same manner. The primary natural end of marriage is, in the economy of nature, the birth and rearing of offspring. Its essential properties and laws must therefore be determined with a view to this end. Consequently, even though marriage were not a sacrament, even if it were governed by laws of nature only, the marriage-contract must be regarded as lasting as long as is required for the rearing of children. What is the length of this period? Even if in nature's scheme there was only one child contemplated, it would certainly carry the parties over a stretch of some twenty-one years: and after that time divorce would hardly be a practical proposition. But, as you know, in the institution of marriage nature does not confine its intentions to the single child. Normally and naturally, in the course of these twenty-one years, other children will also have been born, other nurture-cycles will have begun, and therefore marriage, even as an institution of nature, must be regarded as lasting almost to the end of the lives of the parents, the age at which the last child will have been fully reared.

You remember Locke's delightful argument on the need of parental care in the case of human offspring. The young bird, he tells us, rises from its nest fully fledged and independent in the very same season as that in which the parents meet. Then instinctively

their love dissolves, the conjugal union ceases and they part, perhaps never to meet again. At all events they are free until the next meeting period, 'when Hymen in his usual anniversary season summons them again to choose new mates.' Not so with the children of men. They need many years of upbringing, and during that period nature insists by her primary laws on the continued union of the father and mother for the sake of the child. When all are reared, the parents will of necessity be old. You see, it is the same argument that is developed, but developed at greater length and with more scientific exactitude, in the *Summa Theologica*[1] and the *Summa contra Gentiles*.[2] The latter I would particularly recommend, because in it you will meet a St. Thomas so much more human, because less systematic and austere, than in the *Summa Theologica*. These are the requirements of the primary laws of nature, from the point of view of the permanence of the marriage tie. And you see they are based entirely on considerations connected with the primary end of marriage. It is hardly worth while attempting to establish the indissolubility of marriage for the few years then remaining. But these years also are fully safeguarded by the secondary laws, the laws which relate to the secondary ends of marriage, *viz.*, the happiness of the parents, the greater welfare of the child, and the general interests of society.

Divorce, you know, is generally sought in the period of the rearing of the first child; but in any period divorce, as a study of the natural end of marriage shows, is essentially a betrayal of the child, to whose interests, once the marriage contract is set up, every other interest

[1] *Tertiae partis supplementum*, q. 67.
[2] Book III.

and consideration ought to be subordinate. Once there is question of the right of the child to be reared by those who gave it existence, the loves, disagreements, inconveniences of the parents are all of secondary consequence. In the divorce-court an opposite order obtains—there the child is sacrificed to the convenience and caprice of the parents; its interest, its claims upon its parents, are almost completely ignored.

I give you this reasoning, which you will find fully set out in the *Summa Theologica*, as showing how the primary criterion is applied in special cases. But I recommend it also to your careful thought for its own sake, for the sanity, the simple gravity, with which the great saint approaches a problem of such terrible import for the world. And you will agree with me that the problem is of terrible consequence for all. The dissolution of the family on anything approaching a wide scale means inevitably, in the end, the disappearance of the race. It means also, even before the destruction of society is finally accomplished, a long period of impaired vitality, of sure disintegration, which once begun is not to be arrested by any process of law, or simple resolution of the mind of the masses, or indeed by any sort of machinery contrived by man. When society fails, particularly as regards the principle of its own existence, if God does not intervene, I do not know where we are to look for aid. It is not to be had from society itself.

(*d*) *Conscience and Law.*

Time will not permit me to do more than make a very brief reference to two other outstanding parts of St.

Thomas' teaching, his view of conscience, and his doctrine on law.

One of the most remarkable features of St. Thomas' system is the simple logical oneness of it. Let any one portion of his philosophy be given, and then it becomes possible to deduce a great deal of the rest with almost unerring precision. And so we find that this doctrine of conscience is nothing more than an obvious corollary following on his teaching in regard to goodness. The moral good is any free act leading to the final end. And the primary criterion followed in distinguishing good from evil is furnished by the objects of our faculties. Good acts will be those which adhere to the scheme of nature through realization of the natural ends. The example I gave was that of the indissoluble marriage. The primary natural end of marriage is the rearing of the child, and therefore, marriage must be regarded as a permanent, not a temporary union. Now conscience is the faculty by which we distinguish right from wrong, and since the only faculty which will enable us to discern the natural ends, and the relation of our act to them, is reason, so conscience is nothing more than our ordinary practical reason, the same reason which guides us in the ordinary affairs of our practical life, or, to speak more precisely, it is a special act of that faculty. To me, when first I became acquainted with this very simple teaching of St. Thomas, I must confess it was a source of some disappointment. I had been accustomed to think of conscience in the same way as I afterwards discovered it was regarded by Butler, as something above nature altogether, something mystical, lofty, and ethereal, and most promising and inspiring as a subject for poetry. The ordinary practical reason of man, on the other hand,

is not mystical or ethereal, and it certainly will never serve as a source of inspiration in poetry. But to the developed mind St. Thomas' teaching on conscience can be nothing but a source of satisfaction and of confidence. After all, poetry and an inspired imagination are not the supreme test of truth, and for the philosopher the plain unvarnished truth is everything. What we have to admire in St. Thomas' simple reasoning on conscience is the common sense and the sanity of it, the cold hard logic of it, and the assurance it gives us that our moral perceptions are not mere substanceless imaginings but judgments of reality, and permanent as the basic requirements of our nature are permanent. This is all I can say on conscience.

Under the heading of Law I can only speak of the natural and the eternal law. In the next lecture I shall say something on human law. Already, I am sure, you will have gained a tolerably accurate idea of the natural law. It is a natural law that plants must have moisture, and animals food, that birds must nurture their offspring, that men must take exercise, acquire some knowledge, maintain their lives, train and support their children, *etc.* The natural law means nothing more than the fact that certain things are naturally necessary to us, because without them we cannot exist or develop, that is, within the range of our natural capacities. To deny therefore the existence of natural law is to deny the existence of natural necessities, which, I think, no sensible man would undertake to do.

The presence, then, in man, of natural capacities gives rise to a need for attaining their objects and for utilizing

the means that lead to these objects. Let me explain the exact import of that need. It does not mean that every capacity has to be developed to the full, or even that all capacities must be exercised to some extent. No man is expected to be, or could become, a mathematician, a musician, an engineer, a doctor and a soldier all at once, even though he possessed the capacities for such careers. Indeed, to develop along the lines of one set of capacities will always and necessarily exclude development along some other, or make it very difficult. As a matter of fact, however, nature's economy in this matter is very simple. She supplies every man with a full complement of the faculties in more or less perfection, and then to each of us she leaves the choice of the lines along which development is to take place. And that is the extent of the need of which I spoke. But whatever the faculty exercised, every act of every faculty must, as I said before, be done under law, the law prescribed by the end. A man (*e.g.*) may eat what he likes, provided he does not injure his health, this being nature's chief end in eating. I should add that to formulate the natural law in connexion with certain particular lines of action may be a matter requiring considerable technical skill, as well as a wide acquaintance with psychology and other branches of philosophy, and I need not say that very few persons are fitted to make the attempt. But natural law itself is a very simple conception, and its general content is quite clear, and not above the intelligence of ordinary persons to define.

We now come to the eternal law. The natural law cannot stand by itself. The natural appetites by which all creatures are led to their proper perfections are

certainly the creation of an intelligence above the world. When we think of the complex system of physical, chemical, and other activities by which the plant is urged on to its end: the physical and psychical appetites, of irresistible power, by which the animal is moved to its perfection, the appetite (*e.g.*) for its own continued existence and that of the species, the appetite for food, for the care of offspring, appetites which must have been present from the beginning, as Leslie Stephen pointed out long ago, since without them the race could not have survived a generation: and, lastly, when we consider the existence in man of the same appetites, and others wider still, without which neither individual nor society could come to perfection, we cannot fail to regard them as creations of that intelligence by which the world is guided to its end, as founded therefore on a law of God, a law deeper than nature itself, a law subsistent in the Divine Intelligence, and eternal as God Himself is eternal. And so we conclude that the natural law operative among creatures is dependent on the eternal law, and is a reflection of it, a reflection not accidental and evanescent like the image of a tree in water, but substantive and permanent, in the sense in which we speak of a house as a reflection of the architect's plan, and of the mind that conceived the plan.

The question arises of the order obtaining between these two laws—which is first and which comes later? Ontologically, of course, the eternal law comes first, for it is cause, and the natural law a result. But psychologically, or in the order of knowing, everything will depend on the source from which a man obtains his knowledge. Mere passers-by, coming upon a mansion in the open country, obtain by direct perception a

knowledge of the material building: later, by an act of inference, they come to think of a plan and an architect. Others, who happen to be friends and intimates of the architect, may first be given a view of the plans: and from these it becomes possible to form some conception of the building in actual existence. We, students of ethics, are the passers-by who must begin with a knowledge of the visible and tangible effects. But those to whom God makes revelation of Himself begin with the knowledge of His mind and plan. With them, therefore, the eternal law is the first thing known, the natural law is an inference. May I add that, considering the source from which their knowledge comes, their knowledge is higher and wider and more assured than ours, and should be given precedence over ours.

This lecture must now come to a close. I am sure that some of you are wondering that I have said nothing on the subject of the virtues, which more than anything else deserve a place in any lecture or any treatise dealing with the ethics of St. Thomas. The fact is, however, the subject is too big for the brief treatment it would be possible to give it here, and for that reason I thought it better to omit it altogether. I should like, however, to say one or two words by way of general appreciation. St. Thomas, as you know, takes the enumeration of the virtues from Aristotle. But his own personal contribution to the discussion is enormous. In fact, in no part of his philosophy does Aristotle gain so much at the hands of his great disciple as in these discussions on the virtues. Those of you who are acquainted with the Nicomachean Ethics will remember how loosely its parts are strung together, how difficult it is to work

them up into a connected whole, and how very general are the principles by which Aristotle attempts to analyse the exceedingly complex realities of human life and human purpose. In the *Secunda Secundae* of St. Thomas, we find these loose materials worked up into a single splendid edifice, an edifice of uniform design, of perfect proportion and perspective, and overlaid with a wealth of fine psychological detail which should prove a source of delight to any student of the psychology of actual life. In detail, as you know, the mediaeval mind loved to revel, in its philosophy just as in its cathedrals; but the detailed finish of the *Secunda Secundae* is a very special triumph, and incomparably the best thing that has come down to us from the Middle Ages.

In my next lecture I shall speak of two very special branches of St. Thomas' ethics—his social and his political philosophy.

THE MORAL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF ST. THOMAS *(continued)*

(2) The Social and Political Philosophy of St. Thomas.

A. Social Philosophy.

(*a*) *Introductory.*

When the organizer of these conferences, Father Lattey, invited me to deliver two lectures of an hour each, one on the ethics, another on the social and political philosophy of St. Thomas, I wrote begging to be allowed to give three instead of two, the first to be on St. Thomas' ethics, the second on his social philosophy, the third on his politics. Father Lattey replied that it was impossible. The time available was short, he said, the time-table had been fully drawn up, *etc.* Now, I am sure that was a wise attitude to take up from the organizer's point of view, but it made things difficult for me. You certainly cannot discuss adequately the social and political philosophy of St. Thomas in one short lecture. But I consoled myself with the thought of the Irish boy whose teacher had given him a certain work to do in a certain time: 'it simply can't be done,' he said to himself, 'and that makes it all the easier to do.' The result of Father Lattey's unyielding attitude is that I feel free to deal with my subject in any way I like, and am under no obligation to aim at completeness, either in regard of all the problems or any one. What I propose to do is just to select from the two departments of philosophy with which this lecture is supposed to deal a few of the more important problems, those particularly that have a bearing on present-day

conditions and interests, and to see what St. Thomas has to say about them.[1]

Before beginning, however, I should like to say two more or less obvious things as to the spirit in which one ought to approach the study of this part of St. Thomas' writings. One is that it would not be fair to expect too much from one so far removed in point of time from ourselves. The social and political conditions of today are very different from those of the thirteenth century, and therefore the problems to which these two sets of conditions give rise must be different. It would be unreasonable, for instance, to expect to find in St. Thomas discussions on such questions as woman suffrage, the best way to float a loan, or the merits and demerits of the sympathetic strike. These are problems proper to our day. For my part I wish that Divine Providence had reserved some of them for an even later period.

Secondly, just as it would be unfair to expect too much from St. Thomas, so we ought not to make too light an estimate of discussions coming from such a source, even those dealing with our social and political life. You will say, since the social and political conditions have changed so much, surely doctrines and reasonings that were relevant to the needs of the century in which St. Thomas lived cannot be regarded as applicable now. But that would be assuming that everything has changed. My own view is that the fundamental problems hardly change at all, and in philosophy we are invariably brought back to the fundamental problems. When you come to deal with the really important things

[1] Only such social problems will be touched on as at present give rise to discussion. For this reason nothing will be said about *usury*, which however will be found fully treated in my work, *The Science of Ethics*.

in life it is very difficult to distinguish old from new. Indeed, the great needs of existence are all as old as the human race itself. But whatever is to be said on the general abstract problem of how far special institutions are subject to change, I believe that if you read St. Thomas honestly and with some spirit of reverence, you will find him, in all the big things at least, surprisingly interesting and exceedingly helpful. And now, having devoted so much of the short time at our disposal, perhaps needlessly, to mere generalities, I think we ought to get on to the special business before us.

(*b*) *The Individual and Society.*

In the domain of social philosophy I am sure you will agree that the first and most important of all the problems is that of the family. I mention it for completeness' sake, and just in order that you may not think I have forgotten it: but having given so much of this morning's brief lecture to this special subject, I feel sure that you will absolve me from pursuing it further now.

After the family the next natural group is that of society, and the most fundamental problem confronting us here is that of the relation in which the individual stands to society, or how far he is to be regarded as subordinate to it. Students of ethical literature will realize the great importance of the problem from the extent of the literature which has grown around it, and the many controversies to which it has given rise. On the one side we find a view maintained, chiefly, I may say, by a certain group of French writers known as *solidaristes*, that the individual is only a part of society, and therefore is only a means to its welfare, in fact,

that the relation obtaining between them is just that which obtains between the cell and the body, a relation of complete subordination of part to whole. The individual, therefore, according to this opinion, has no rights as against society. On the other side it has been urged that the individual is naturally a free being, and therefore is not subordinate to any human institution, except indeed in so far as men willingly renounce their freedom—for instance, in order to place themselves under government, as happened, we are told, in the beginning, when first men organized themselves into that community which we speak of as the State. Under this second view, so far as nature is concerned, the individual is not subordinate in any way to the community.

Amongst modern English writers, for instance, Mr. Barker, in his work *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, and Mr. Hadow, in his recent interesting work on *Citizenship*, I notice a tendency to take up a mid position between these two schools of thought. With their work, of course, I have nothing to do, but it is interesting in the present connection, because this is also the position taken up by St. Thomas Aquinas, for reasons, however, very different from theirs, and to my mind of far greater moment. Society, he tells us, is natural, and the individual is naturally a part of society—therefore, he is naturally subordinate to it. On the other hand, the individual is not a *mere* part, and therefore is not completely subordinate. He is not merely a part, because society is not his final end, and society is not his final end, because the individual is possessed of faculties which extend beyond society (you see how we are constantly being brought back to this great outstanding fact and principle of human psychology),

faculties which reach out to that very end to which the whole world and society itself are directed, and to which they are completely subordinate, *viz.*, the Infinite Good, God, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe. I should like every person here to read the chapter in the *Summa contra Gentiles*[1] that deals with the subject. It is a chapter that is often only half understood. It is very brief, but it will give you a higher and nobler idea of the place of the individual in the scheme of divine providence than anything else in St. Thomas' work. You will learn from it that God is the final end of the individual: but you will learn a great deal more: you will discover the exact sense, the very special sense, in which God stands to individual men as their end. God is the end of every created thing. He is the end of the cell in the body and the end of the whole lower creation. But whilst the lower creatures like the cell in the body are directed to Him as end *mediately* only, that is, through the whole of which they are part, for the reason that they have no faculty by which they can reach out to God, know God, desire Him, feel the need of Him; the human creature can come into direct contact with Him by an ordinary act of human intelligence and will. The eye can behold the material heavens, which yet spatially are so distant from us. By our intelligence and will we are brought into immediate relation with an object more distant still—the infinite good. God, therefore, is the last end of each individual man. In a sense He is also our immediate and direct end: neither human society, nor the whole material world, nor even the angels and archangels can set themselves between us.

And what I have said of the individual holds also for

[1] Lib. III, c. 111; *cf.* c. 112.

the family. The family, like the individual, being a part of society, is subordinate to the whole. But the family is not a mere part of society—it is itself a natural social unit, with an end and function all its own—the rearing of the child. And, therefore, the family is not wholly subordinate. As regards its own constitution and function it is independent of society, and must not be interfered with unless in so far as its natural functions are not being faithfully performed. Society, for instance, has a right to see that parents look after their children, and in extreme cases may even use compulsion for the attainment of this end, But otherwise, as regards its essential function, the family cannot be interfered with by any human power.

To some of you I am sure the question will have occurred whether and how far these two sets of competing claims can be reconciled: in other words, how far individual and family are subordinate to society, and how far it is open to them to pursue their own ends independently of the needs of the great social organism of which they form a part. It is a big question, and I could hardly be expected to deal with it now: but I may be permitted to point to two important conclusions by way of example. The individual must subordinate his ordinary interests to the proved necessities of society. In special cases, for instance, he might be expected to surrender a good deal of his property to meet the exigencies of the body politic. But in no case may governments deprive an innocent man of life or the means necessary for life, nor any man of the means necessary to attain his final end. Then, as regards the family, the essential function of the family is the rearing of the child—*educatio*, and in the scheme of nature the parents are the only persons

who share that function. The rearing of the child is not the business of the State nor part of its business. The State has its own natural functions to perform, but the rearing of the child is not one of them. And since education or mental or moral training is, as the word itself indicates, a part of rearing, and the highest part, so the education of the child falls primarily on the parent. What the parent is not able to accomplish in this connexion the State should help to supply, because, as Aristotle shows us, that is what the State is for, to supply the things which individual and family cannot provide. The State then may help, but it can never supersede the parent in the exercise of this important function. In the education therefore of the child, the family is not completely subordinate to society. Governments have the right to see to it that a sufficient education is provided: governments may provide standards and insist on tests: but they have no right to set the views and wishes of parents completely at naught, or force them into compliance in regard to the great fundamental things, such as religion, the moral law, and the place of religion in the school life of the child.

On purely utilitarian grounds John Stuart Mill insisted many years ago that no government should commit the whole youth of a country to one particular form of education. It would lead, as he pointed out, to want of initiative, to want of all the things that go with spontaneity and freedom, to weakness in the national character, to everything in fact that you have been accustomed in these latter years to include under the word autocracy and autocratically governed peoples. St. Thomas gives us the same conclusion as John Stuart

Mill, but he builds on other principles. Education is a part of rearing, and therefore we may conclude that the parent is to be accepted as the ultimate authority and arbiter, not, indeed, on questions of a purely technical character, in the domain particularly of secular instruction, such as the best method of teaching arithmetic or whether arithmetic should be taught, matters on which a parent may know little or nothing, but on all matters that fall within their competence or the competence of another institution, like the Church, at all events on all matters that, for a certainty, lie outside the competence of the State, such, for instance, as religion, the moral law, and the character of the environment in which the child is to be trained. In these matters the parent is possessed of indefeasible rights, and is subject also to certain ultimate responsibilities, which cannot be renounced, or completely devolved on other bodies.

(*c*) *Private Property.*

I pass on now to another important problem in St. Thomas' social philosophy—the problem of private property. On one point I know I can afford to be brief, because St. Thomas' position is so well known, the question whether the institution of private property is necessary, and necessary in natural law. In an article of the *Secunda Secundae*[1] with which I am sure most of you are familiar, and which you should always keep before you in any discussion bearing on his theory of property, St. Thomas shows that the system of private property not only is lawful but also is necessary for human life, in the sense that without it the wealth provided by

[1] Q. 66, art. 2.

nature would not be properly administered. For, first, there would be no incentive to production: secondly without it there would be no order in the use of things, (the State, *e.g.*, could not attempt to divide up the goods of the world—lands, houses, furniture, clothes, pictures, jewellery, *etc.*—and particularly could not divide them equally, which is the claim of all those who advocate common ownership): without it, thirdly, there would be neither peace nor contentment in the realm, for whereas under the system of private property men are free to carve out a career for themselves, to take whatever chances offer, so that their position is very largely of their own making, under the opposed system no man is free to make his own position, whether opportunity offers or does not, and therefore only the favoured few could be content. These arguments it would take a considerable time to develop, but those of you who are acquainted with the recent literature for and against socialism will recognize them as containing the essentials of our case, even to-day, in favour of private property.

There remains an argument relating to private property which is sometimes forgotten or not given sufficient prominence, but which I regard as of exceedingly great importance—and for that reason I should like to give it special mention in these lectures. It is to the effect that not only is the system of private property necessary for human welfare, but also that the individual man, from the place he occupies in the natural scheme of things, is given a *right in justice* to property, a right to take over dominion of the lower parts of creation, and that to prevent him from doing so is a violation of the natural law. In several of his works, *e.g.*, the *Summa*

contra Gentiles,[1] the Commentaries on Aristotle,[2] and the *Summa Theologica*,[3] St. Thomas shows that just as the mineral and vegetative worlds are naturally means to the sensuous, *first*, because they are lower, and what is lower and less perfect is in the scheme of nature always means to the higher and more perfect: *secondly*, because the sensuous world includes them in itself, every sensuous thing having also in itself the vegetative nature: *thirdly*, because the animal is given the faculty of using them, in fact, lives by their use: so the whole lower creation is to be regarded as means to man because (I repeat the three reasons) man being endowed with intellect is above the lower creature, because he includes the lower natures in his own, and because he is endowed by nature with a faculty of using all for his own benefit.

And concerning this third reason I should like to point out (and to this I want to call your particular attention) that the faculty of use which man enjoys is of a higher order altogether than that which is given to animals in respect of the things below them. The animal cannot provide the things necessary for its life: it can only utilize the things which nature provides—the things that happen to be at hand. Its use, in other words, of what nature provides is use of the fruits only: moreover, it is use of them here and now: it cannot take thought of the future. To an ox a field under grass is nothing more than so much grass, a huge meal of grass, to be eaten if possible at this very moment when it is seen. That is all the animal perceives of what lies before it: that is all it appreciates. Sense

[1] Book III, chapters 122, 111, 112.
[2] Book I, chapter 6.
[3] II.–II. q. 66, art. 1, and q. 64, art. 1.

perceives only the surface of things. To the source beneath, to the powers concealed in the earth, to the other potential harvests which the land might produce but has not yet produced, animal perception never penetrates. That is why I said that animal use is use of the fruits only and use of them here and now. Man, on the other hand, by his faculty of reason, is capable of having and holding in stable and permanent possession. For reason penetrates to the source beneath, to the substance of the land, the thing which does not perish in its use, the thing which, having been once used, still continues for further use, and out of it a man can draw harvests as numerous and varied as the potencies of the soil itself. Man, therefore, can take the earth itself under his control, can dispose of it in this way or that, according to his needs, and that is all that property in the full sense means—the power and right of permanent disposal. That we have the *power* is evident from the fact that we do actually take the land into our control and work it as our own: that we have the *right* to do so is also evident, since it is nature that has given us the power, showing clearly that it is her intention and policy that man should take things into ownership, and that the substance and not the fruits only should be owned. I know, of course, that the mere possession of a power is not the only thing that is required to give a man a right in any particular case, and therefore, that to establish ownership over a particular object we must consider other things besides the mere presence of a faculty of ownership. For, first, the thing that we take under our control must be of an order of nature lower than ourselves—it must be something which is a means to man. No man could take another person under

his control as his property, for no man is a mere means to another, or to any body of men: every individual man is, as we said, a person, *sui juris*, *propter seipsum existens*. Secondly, even to own the lower things we require some *title* of ownership also, such as gift, purchase, our own labour, over and above the power to own. What, however, the possession of this faculty of ownership supplied to men by nature does clearly establish is the general intention and policy of nature; and it yields us the valuable conclusion that there is such a thing as a right of ownership given to man and that this right is natural. You will say, perhaps, the right of ownership is one which belongs to humanity at large and not to the individual.[1] But that is not the case. Two things have to be remembered in this connexion, first, the obvious consideration that humanity at large could not effectively take over ownership of anything, and secondly, and this is principal, the fact that the individual has in him the fulness of human reason,[2] and that, since this is the root title of ownership, so the individual has in him the full title by which ownership is conferred. Ownership, therefore, is not a right of humanity only, but of the individual as well.

The objection may also be made that all other individuals possess this faculty as truly as any particular

[1] In one of the references just quoted (viz. the *Summa Theol.* II.–II. q. 66, art. 1), St. Thomas abstracts from the question whether the right belongs to humanity at large or to the individual; but that is because he has not yet reached the question of private or individual ownership. In art. 1 he shows that the possession of external things is natural; in the next article he shows that men may possess them *ut proprias*, *i.e.*, as individual property to the exclusion of other persons.

[2] Compare also *Summa c. Gent.* III. 112: *manifestum est partes omnes*, etc.

one, and that therefore the right of one man may be ruled out by the competing rights of others. And this is true. But all that it proves is that at least in the first act whereby ownership is taken over, *i.e.*, the act of occupancy, and before other more personal titles, such as labour, gift, purchase, bequest, begin to be set up, special provisions and modifications have always to be introduced in view of these competing rights of other men. But this being allowed for, the claim has to be conceded, which is all I am contending for at present, that the right of dominion is a right of individuals, and not a mere right of humanity as such, because the individual is endowed by nature with the full radical title of property, *viz.*, his powers of intellect and will, whereby the whole material world is made subservient to man. This being the policy of nature, it becomes the right of any individual to acquire property if he is able, provided of course, that he can put up a title, and provided also that he does not interfere with the established rights of other people. It follows, too, that governments, instead of limiting the right of individual ownership, should do all they can to facilitate and promote it. For nature's policy is best for every one: both for the individual and the community: and it is only within the limits of her policy that true liberty is to be found.

(*d*) *Some disputed passages on property.*

I should like, now, before leaving this general subject of property to bring to your notice certain passages in the works of St. Thomas which may give you some trouble later when you come, as I hope you will, to read him at first hand. These are passages which have been given

a great deal of prominence in recent ethical literature: they have excited a good deal of controversy, and a great deal of harm has been done through want of a right understanding of them. They are passages, therefore, with which you ought to be acquainted, and which you should be able to expound aright when occasion arises. I shall be as brief as I can, because I know the subject of property is very tiresome, and you are anxious to get on to other matters of lighter quality, if, indeed, there be such things in philosophy.

There are three sets of controverted passages to be noticed. The first is the statement, repeated many times in St. Thomas,[1] that though property, so far as acquisition and administration are concerned, may be a matter for individuals, the use of it ought to be common. From this the extraordinary conclusion has been drawn that therefore St. Thomas is to be regarded as favouring a system of common ownership, at least as regards the use of things. Now this is just one of the cases I had in my mind when I asked you to refer to a certain article in St. Thomas whenever a question arose of his meaning in regard to property. For with that article before you, it must at once occur to you that, since St. Thomas maintains the necessity of private property as an incentive to production and a means to peace, he could hardly insist that the use of property ought to be common in the sense here explained. What incentive, for instance, has a man to work his own land to the utmost, if everybody can use it as well as himself, in the sense of turning it into a park, or sowing seed in it, and reaping the harvest just as anybody wills? And how is peace to be

[1] *Summa Theol.* I–II. q. 105, art. 2; II–II. q. 66, art. 2; also the Comm. on Aristotle's Politics, Book 2, lesson 4.

maintained if everybody can make use of another man's house with the same freedom as the owner? This, therefore, is evidently not his meaning. As a matter of fact, however, St. Thomas' intention is perfectly obvious to any one who cares to read him intelligently and honestly, for it is given in the very same sentence in which he speaks of common use, so that it is hard to understand how any mistake could have been made about it. The use of things, he writes, ought to be common in the sense that one ought to be open-handed in helping others in necessity: *usus ipsarum: et quantum ad hoc non debet homo habere res exteriores ut proprias sed ut communes: ut, scilicet, de facili aliquis eas communicet in necessitate aliorum.* And he gives examples to make his meaning clear, most of them taken from Aristotle. In this spirit, he tells us, farmers should lend freely their horses and agricultural implements to one another: poor men, particularly passers-by, should be allowed to glean in the fields and to consume the odd bunches left behind in the vineyards; they should be given food when they are hungry: but, he adds naïvely, that it would be better not to let them carry things away to eat. That, now, is St. Thomas' whole teaching in regard to common use, and I think you will agree with me, it is very different from the common use of which socialists speak. In fact it amounts to nothing more than, on the negative side, an ordinary prohibition against extreme selfishness, against the rigid exclusion of the whole world from our possessions, or the policy of holding all that we have got; and on the positive side, a general precept of generosity and open-handedness with others, a precept which all men recognize as part of the very meaning of civilization, and which

all decent men act on in their everyday lives, whether they are owners of landed property or not.

The second set of controverted passages will help us to open up a larger and more important discussion still. Scattered up and down through the writings of St. Thomas are to be found references to the division of property amongst different owners, as originating in some kind of private agreement or some positive law—*ex humano condicto*, or, *ex jure humano*—and on the basis of these statements an attempt has been made in recent years to show that rights of property, instead of being natural, are all based on contract, on the will of the legislator, or on the will of the community represented by the legislator, the insinuation being that what the legislator has given he can take away, that rights instituted by him can be recalled or modified at his pleasure.

Now, St, Thomas' teaching is very clear and simple, and leads to no such preposterous conclusion as that property is a purely civil institution. Let me explain this by reference to a distinction with which many of you, I am sure, are already familiar, and which is essential for the proper understanding of St. Thomas' whole doctrine on ownership. Treating of the question whether ownership is common by natural law, he tells us that a thing may be common in either of two senses, *viz.*, positively common or negatively common. Things are positively common if the natural law requires that they be held in common ownership. They are negatively common if, whilst the natural law requires that they be taken into private ownership, nevertheless it does not itself assign property to this person or that, leaving such division to be made by some kind of human

act, some human arrangement or intervention, which may be effective for the purpose. Now this latter, according to St. Thomas, is exactly the way nature has acted in regard to the wealth she spreads so lavishly before us: she does not insist that it shall be held in common: on the contrary, she insists, and insisted from the first, that it should be held in private ownership, for the reasons I have already quoted. But she did not herself in the beginning[1] effect any particular distribution: she did not then label things the property of *a* or *b* —this she left for men themselves to do, whether by simple occupancy (a natural title), by agreement, or, what is very intelligible if there happens to be a government present, by intervention on the part of the ruling authority. That, of course, is plain history and plain common sense, and is accepted by all. But clear as it is, I want you to notice two things about it that are very often forgotten. One is, that nature *did* insist that her goods be taken into private ownership, for, as St. Thomas says, it is absolutely necessary for natural welfare. Consequently, any division that was brought about by human intervention in the beginning, whether by governmental arrangement or any other, was effected in response to this edict of nature, and therefore any ownership that was set up, was set up by natural law, and is binding in natural law. I think that too much could not be made of that initial mandate of nature, a mandate that is still in force, requiring that things be taken into private ownership. It demonstrates how

[1] It is clear that in later history many natural titles would become operative, such as labour, gift, purchase, bequest, whereby individuals would become owners in natural law. The chief difficulty is that of the attitude of nature when first things were being taken into possession.

closely nature allies herself, not only with the system of private ownership in general, but with the division of property actually made amongst individual men. Secondly, it is important to remember that whatever may have been the kind of intervention utilized in the beginning in order to bring to realization this mandate of nature in favour of private property, the result *was* private property—private property in the full sense and nothing short of that. When property was set up, whether by occupancy, by agreement, or by law,[1] the result was real ownership, and therefore it was governed by the natural laws of ownership, and with it, independently altogether of how or by whom it was conferred, went all the rights that inhere in ownership as natural attributes of it, such as permanence, inviolability, *etc.* The natural attributes are always present and operative, no matter by what process things are brought into existence, and this principle is valid for ownership as well as for everything else. Let me illustrate what I am saying by two examples. I suppose that in the whole range of human action there is no more arbitrary or gratuitous act than gift. It is a free act, and nature does not urge us to do it in any way. Yet when a man gives money the new ownership that is effected is real ownership, and ownership binding in natural law: it has attaching to it all the rights that inhere in ownership as natural attributes, and to disallow these rights would be a violation of natural law. Not even the giver can take from a man what he has been put in possession of in this way. So neither can property be disturbed,

[1] It is rarely that ownership would be set up by law in the beginning. At that period most ownership would come into existence by a single act of occupancy.

even though the State had a hand in the first distribution of it.

The second example is taken from a sphere wholly different from that of property. Nature has not assigned to any man a particular wife—that is a matter of his own choice, and, I suppose, of hers as well. It is a matter of free arrangement between two persons, and therefore it arises *ex humano condicto*, if anything in this world does. But once the parties are married, their relations are governed by natural law, because marriage is an institution of nature: and the rights of each are natural rights, because these rights are inherent in marriage as natural attributes of it, and violations of them are violations of natural law. So also property, like marriage, is a natural institution, with its own laws and attributes, and even though governments may have to intervene in the beginning, as in some cases I suppose they did, in order to carry out nature's behest in regard to her goods, assigning one thing to one man, another to another, nevertheless ownership having been once effected, it gave to the individual the full rights of property, not only as against individuals, but as against governments also, and to ignore or encroach on these rights would be a violation of natural law. For these two reasons, the general edict of nature, and the fact that property brings with it all the natural attributes of ownership, be the human interventions what they may, it is clear that rights of private ownership are natural, and not of civil obligation only. Of course all rights of justice are subject to limitations enforced by the other virtues. A father owns his money, but he must support his children: children must come to the aid of aged parents: the rich should support the

poor: all men are bound to contribute to the support of the State. These are special duties, with as much right to acknowledgment as any duty of justice. But I am speaking here of the right which ownership as such confers, apart from special duties: and, as I have said, ownership as such confers a complete right of disposal, and that right must be recognized by all—not only by private individuals but by the public authorities as well.

I pass on now to consider the third set of controverted passages. In a sense it is more important than the others. You all know, of course, that once a man becomes fully owner he is given full rights of disposal. But then out of what is his own he has, as I have just said, to meet certain claims; for instance, a father has to pay his debts, he has to support his family, he has to pay taxes to the State. Now there is one of those claims that has been given a good deal of prominence in recent ethical literature, and it is necessary to say a very special word about it. I refer to the obligations that arise in the case of extreme poverty amongst one's neighbours, or what is usually known as extreme necessity. It is generally admitted that there is a grave obligation of succouring a man in extreme necessity. It is an obligation which attaches to property now, and has attached to it from the beginning. When things were first being taken into ownership, either through occupancy or some act of State, there was one condition that had to be rigidly observed, and that was that no man could take or be given ownership of anything that was absolutely necessary to other men, or to the community. The mere fact that anything was necessary to anybody gave to that one a prior claim not shared by the rest. Now the

same condition that attached to property when first things were being taken over by individuals, can never be dissociated from it: it continues to be operative at every period later: and therefore if even now a man should be in extreme need it is our duty to relinquish such portion of our property as is needed to meet that need, allowance of course being made for the existence of a corresponding obligation in other owners. That, I think, is a point of moral doctrine which is understood by all. Under modern conditions it is not often that this obligation arises in actual fact. The poor law provides a good deal of money for the assistance of the needy: public insurance and unemployment benefit are available for all: old age pensions are provided for the class most liable to distress: whilst every city has its mendicity or analogous institutions to meet emergency cases. If, however, in spite of these things a case of extreme necessity occurs, then the obligation of which we have spoken arises, and it rests on all those who are in a condition to help. That is the commonly accepted view of moralists and others, and it certainly is the clear teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. But the point that I want to bring out here is that this simple doctrine of the rights of a man in extreme need, which even the most full-blooded conservative has no difficulty in accepting, has been used by certain writers to press St. Thomas into what some one has called the moderate left wing of Socialism, as lightly as if he were a Karl Marx or a Belfort Bax. 'Superfluous things,' says St. Thomas in one place[1], 'must be given for the sustentation of the poor' (notice that he is writing about the case of extreme need), and therefore he is represented

[1] II–II. q. 66, art. 7.

as maintaining that superfluous things are to be surrendered in every case, in fact, that ownership gives a man a right to nothing but the means of subsistence for himself and his family—that to the rest he has no title. Now notice that there is only one place[1] in which St. Thomas enters on a formal discussion of this question of superfluous wealth, and I should like here to bring out the chief features of that discussion—they will help to show you where exactly St. Thomas stands, and what the conclusion to be drawn from his teaching. In the first place he tells us that it is only when a man has provided (he even insinuates, provided well) for himself and his family that disbursements are to be made: that end being attained, he must out of what is superfluous come to the aid of individuals in *extreme* necessity, and to the aid of the community should it find itself in a condition of *grave* necessity. He recognizes no strict obligation in any other case. We may, he says, give to others if we like, but that is a matter of counsel, not precept. Secondly, the obligation is one of charity only, not of justice, and since our obligation in regard to superfluous things is one of charity only, it follows that what is superfluous is properly our own. A man, you know, gives charity, not out of other people's pockets, but out of his own. *Providus homo*, he writes in another connexion,[2] *propria expendit et dat*, and he adds that if things are common there is no liberality in giving, because then you give what is not your own—*quod autem aliquis dat communia non est multum liberalitatis*—a statement of which you will prefer the lesson to the latinity. Thirdly, St. Thomas states

[1] II–II. q. 32, art. 5.

[2] Commentary on Aristotle's Politics, II. 4.

explicitly that our obligation is to give, not *what* is superfluous, that is, all that is superfluous, but *out of* what is superfluous (*de superfluo*); in other words, we must give what is required to relieve a man in extreme necessity, the rest we may keep for our own use. You will agree with me that this is a very sensible and moderate doctrine, and very far removed from the theory that no man has a right to superfluous wealth. Subject, of course, to the requirements of duty, a man has a right in justice to all the fruits of his property, whether these fruits be superfluous or not, and whether they be small or great. *Res fructificat domino* is an old and universally accepted principle of Catholic thinking.[1]

These are passages that have excited a good deal of controversy in recent times, and it is important that you should be acquainted with them. To my mind, had St. Thomas been read fully and carefully, and not merely here and there, and disconnectedly, they should have led to no such unfortunate misunderstandings as have arisen.

(*e*) *Wages and Profits.*

Let us now pass on to treat of two or three of the lighter problems in justice which are usually to be found in our manuals of social science.

You will hardly expect to find a formal discussion in St. Thomas on such a modern problem as the just wage, since the wages system was not developed in St. Thomas' day. But undoubtedly he supplies the fundamental

[1] In *Quodlibet* VI. q. vii, art. 12 (*Opuscula*, Vol. II.) St. Thomas explains that even clerics may retain superfluous wealth deriving from *patrimonia* or *juste acquisita*. *Bona ecclesiastica*, on the other hand, fall under a different rule.

principle, and in this particular controversy the principle is all in all.

You know what the main problem of the living wage is. It is the problem of the right standard. Now there are economists who maintain that this standard is furnished by the products of labour: that a man should be paid the value of what he produces. It is known as the 'value of the products' theory. It is a difficult theory to apply in practice, for industry has become so complex and division of labour so minute that it is hard to determine exactly the amount produced by any individual. If, for instance, we take account of the things used in the manufacture of the leather, the thread, and the other accessories, it is clear that a hundred hands or more may be employed in the making of a single pair of boots, and who would attempt to determine the exact value contributed by any individual? Besides, it is a matter of experience that employers will always interpret the 'value of the products' theory to their own advantage and not the workman's: when prices rise, for instance, very little of the resultant increase in the profits finds its way to the employee.

There are others who say that wages should be regulated by supply and demand. This theory also is usually used to the advantage of the employer. When the supply of labour is small the wages are not found to rise—at least not proportionally: but when the supply is large wages are always found to fall.

Of late years the view has been spreading, particularly amongst the working classes themselves, that when a labourer gives his whole working day to the employer he should be paid *as minimum wage* such an amount as enables him to live in comfort and supply his ordinary

wants. That being secured, there will be room for modifications above this level corresponding to differences in the value of the work done and other considerations.

Now that is the view that seems to find favour with St. Thomas. He does not treat the subject very formally but, as I said, his account of the principle is clear. The chief references are Q.7, articles 17 and 18 of the *Quodlibetalia*, and q. 187, art 3, of the *Secunda Secundae* of the *Summa Theologica*. Dealing with the necessity and value of manual labour he puts forward this remarkable suggestion: 'our estimate of things ought to be based on their end': *judicium de unaquaque re sumendum est secundum finem ad quem ordinatur*. But the chief end of labour, he adds, is the maintenance of life (*sustentatio*): we are therefore entitled to draw the conclusion that the just minimum wage is that which is sufficient for maintenance. But what is maintenance? St. Thomas certainly makes it quite clear that under maintenance is contained a great deal more than food. His examples are food, clothing, arms (by which I suppose is meant the implements of labour: it can hardly mean revolvers). These are only examples, examples of the objects included in *sustentatio*, and what they establish is that a man should be paid a wage sufficient to supply all the requirements of a decent life. I may add that, had he treated the question formally, I am sure he would have included amongst the necessaries of life the support of the family as well as of oneself, so that the wage to be paid would be the *family*, and not the *personal* wage. The support of the family is amongst a man's most sacred obligations.

Passing to less important matters than the amount

of the wage, we find that in another place (I-II. q. 105, art. 2.) St. Thomas insists that wages should be paid at regular and brief intervals, because whereas an employer can afford to wait for his money, the workman cannot. Again, he writes, employees should be treated gently, *modeste tractentur* (he is speaking of household servants, but his reasoning is applicable to all employees), and they should be given the sabbath rest just like their masters. In other words, if we may draw a general lesson, employees should be treated not as animals, that are just fed in order to yield the maximum of profit, but as human beings with souls of their own and a right to an existence consonant with their high dignity as men. As I said, St. Thomas does not at any point enter into a lengthy or formal discussion of the wages contract: but did he live today there is no doubt he would have shown himself strongly opposed to many of the existing features of our industrial system.

Another very important social problem at present confronting the world is that of prices and profiteering, and I am sure you will be astonished to find that it has been fully treated by St. Thomas Aquinas. In a vigorous article of the *Secunda Secundae* (q. 77, art. 1.) he denounces the system of buying and selling for profit, and he denounces it not for what it is in itself, but for what it essentially leads to. Trading for gain, he says, is not in itself bad: a man may justly look for profits for many reasons, *e.g.*, as a means of livelihood, as a help to charity, or as a requital for the service that is rendered to the community. On these grounds a moderate profit may be looked for. What is wrong in trading for profit is the fact that of itself it includes no principle of limitation, no norm of justice: of itself it

sets no bounds to the lust for gain, but tends to infinity, in the sense of authorizing the seller to wring all he can out of the purchasing community, without consideration of the value of commodities—*quantum est de se deservit cupiditati lucri quae terminum nescit, sed in infinitum tendit.* In other words, the logical development of the system of profits is profiteering, in the worst sense of the word, and for that reason it is censurable (*ut vituperetur*) and should be restrained. If you ask me how it is to be restrained, I can only say that this article ought to be read in conjunction with another discussion immediately following,[1] in which he clearly indicates the necessity of state intervention in the regulation of prices.

Again there is the problem of trusts, and corners in trade. These also St. Thomas condemns. In an interesting article devoted to some of the provisions of the Old Law,[2] a part of the *Summa* that is very little read, he submits that unlimited freedom in buying and selling should not be allowed in the things that are necessary for human life; and at the same time are limited in quantity. If the land can be bought and sold without restriction, he says, then eventually the whole country could be made to fall into the hands of a few persons, and the rest of the people would be compelled to emigrate, a statement pregnant with lessons for the rulers of modern states. It is clear, for instance, that St. Thomas would have no truck with the doctrine of *laissez faire*, or the principle of commerce untrammelled by law, a doctrine that was once fully accepted in England, and which, though nominally rejected by academic

[1] Q. 77, art. 2, ad 2.
[2] I–II. q. 105, art. 2.

economists in recent times, is still in actual fact a governing principle of commerce in most countries. Three conclusions follow essentially from St. Thomas' brief teaching on trading in the land. First, all trade and industry should be regulated, so that the interests of the many may not be sacrificed to the rapacity of the few. Secondly, property should not become concentrated in the hands of a few persons, but should be widely diffused. The people, in other words, should not be disallowed all opportunity of becoming, by fair means, owners of the land or of business concerns through the automatic workings of commerce, which can always be manipulated by a few powerful and designing men to crush out the many, and keep them in a condition of complete dependence on the few. Thirdly, what St. Thomas says of the land he would certainly also have said of ordinary commodities, particularly those that are necessary for human existence. If extreme concentration in land-ownership is to be disallowed because the many are thus crushed out of ownership, surely what is now known as cornering, particularly in the necessaries of life, for instance cornering in the grain-crops, in cattle, in building materials, in cotton, should also be disallowed, as working out to terrible evils for the majority of men.

He has an interesting reference to house-property. Houses, St. Thomas tells us, unlike the land, may be bought and sold without governmental restrictions, for the number of houses is not limited, and it is open to any man to build for himself. You must remember, however, that in St. Thomas' day there was no such thing as city congestion as we know it. Did he live to-day, and saw your London, where building sites are not to be

had for love or money, except money out of all proportion to the value of the sites, he would, I fancy, have recommended restrictions and very drastic legislation, fixing rents and site-values with a view to the public interest.

Private property is good: private property is necessary: private property is every man's right, if the opportunity arises to acquire it: but the more diffused it is, the better for all. Over-concentration (I speak now only of extreme over-concentration) in the hands of the few brings with it dispossession of the many, and is a standing menace to the good order of the community. This is the clear teaching of the *Summa Theologica*. But there is another side to be emphasized also. Once property is established, it is nearly always wrong, and certainly is always dangerous, to interfere with it, either by way of suppressing ownership (and if this happens, at least a man should be given compensation), or by limiting a man's freedom in developing and extending what is his own, or even in acquiring further reasonable possessions. I say even in acquiring possessions, for a man has a perfect right to acquire property when acquisition can be accomplished without obvious injustice to other determinate persons, and without certain and inevitable damage to the community. What will be evident to all of you is that very little is ever accomplished for anybody by interference in any of these ways. It is the spirit of rapacity that does the harm, and not extension of property as such; and therefore the law ought to bestow much more of its attention on the former than on the latter. It will do no good to anybody to suppress factories or confiscate them. But if a spirit of humanity, of fair play, of justice and of charity is widely engendered,

there will be no badly paid workmen and no wage-slavery. All this is to be found in St. Thomas; particularly in the Commentaries on Aristotle. It is far more important, he tells us, to suppress avarice, that men may not desire too much, than to interfere with property, that they may not have too much: *magis oportet regulare interiores concupiscentias animae, ut scilicet non inordinata concupiscant, quam exteriores substantias, ut scilicet non immoderata habeant.*[1] I think that even modern statesmen might learn much wisdom from that simple statement. It came down to St. Thomas from Aristotle, but St. Thomas made it fully his own. It brings out the essential defect of our present-day industrial system, and to my mind it suggests the only effective, certainly the only lasting remedy.

These are a few of the problems of social science on which guidance is to be had from our saint. You will notice that they nearly all fall under the heading of justice. But justice is not the only social virtue. There are others, such as charity, liberality, friendship, truth. In a sense these are more important than justice, for they aim at higher objects, and they certainly are more human. 'Men,' says Mr. Barker 'do not merely live in a cold region of reasonable acknowledgment of the principle of requital.' There is need of the warmer virtues as well, to brighten and support their days. But time presses, and I must leave you to read the rest yourselves. The *Secunda Secundae*, in which all these virtues are fully treated, is one of the great masterproductions of the Middle Ages. As a philosophy of

[1] Comm. on Aristotle's Politics II. 8, or (in some editions) II. 7.

human conduct there is no other work to compare with it. If only men and the teachers of men would take its lessons to heart, human society would not long remain the drab unlovely thing that it now is, and might even become what in the beginning it was meant to be, and what it would be even now, had not sin come to spoil God's work—a true *civitas Dei*, a city of God.

(2) The Social and Political Philosophy of St. Thomas (*continued*).

B. Political Philosophy.

Only a few minutes remain in which to speak of St. Thomas' political system. The main discussions are to be found. first in his Commentary on Aristotle's Politics, a large and heavy work, secondly, in the *De Regimine Principum*, of which very little was written by St. Thomas, and thirdly, in certain parts of the *Summa Theologica*, chiefly I-II, q. 105, and the previous chapters on Law. At present I can only deal with three or four pivotal points.

On the definition and origin of the State St. Thomas gives full acceptance to Aristotle's views. The State is a development out of the family. The family by itself is able to supply some very elementary wants, but these fall far short of what is required for the developed life: for this the co-operation of many minds and hands is necessary. As however the family expands and takes on the dimensions of a clan or tribe, a certain division of labour begins to be possible, and with it the satisfaction of the more complex needs. There will still be wanting many of the requirements of the developed life, *e.g.*, some kind of military and economic organization, the setting up of legislative and administrative bodies and tribunals of justice. But gradually such a degree of organization will be reached as will put the community in a position to supply all its wants, and when that is attained, the condition, that is, which Aristotle speaks of as self-sufficiency, a new condition of things arises. The old family community must then be regarded as having undergone a complete change; a specifically

new unit will then be found to have emerged, which, because it is distinct, will in time, if not immediately, be compelled to throw off the rigid shackles of the family organization and adopt a form of its own. This specifically new social unit we speak of as the State. That is St. Thomas' view, taken from Aristotle, of the nature and origin of the State. About thirty years ago it found very little favour amongst the greater writers on politics, in England particularly, but I think that it is fully accepted now. It is the only view that harmonizes with recent investigations on the question of origins. The starting-points of these investigations were widely different—some were enquiries into the history of the primitive races, some related to certain survivals from older civilizations which are clearly discernible in the institutions of Greece and Rome, some had to do with the foundations of Roman jurisprudence. But all converged to one central focus far back in the history of things—the family, as the great constructive unit of society in its earliest beginnings.

I will ask you to be content with this brief treatment of the question of the origin of the State. It would need a good deal of correction to bring it to the level of strict scientific truth. But as an outline it will help you to understand St. Thomas' general position.

Another problem much and hotly discussed in modern times is that of the origin of civil authority. That authority comes ultimately from God all Catholic writers will agree. But the problem remains of its proximate origin, its secondary cause, whether it derives under God from the people, from the position of ruler, or from some other source. Now I have seen many attempts to

bring St. Thomas into this controversy. Indeed, I may tell you that I have read him very carefully to see if I could enlist him on my own side, which is opposed to that of Suarez, for I do not regard civil authority as springing in every case from the people. In my investigations I found many passages which I could quote in support of my own view and as against Suarez. But my final opinion is that St. Thomas is not to be enlisted on any side, for the simple reason that he has given us no formal discussion on the subject. I consider, also, that it is unfair to him to build up arguments on casual statements which are only indirectly connected with this controversy, and certainly were never intended in any sense to be taken as contributions to it. For this reason I feel that I am absolved from further discussion of the matter in this lecture. The subject is interesting of itself, and, as I said, I have my own view about it. But I have to remember that these lectures are intended as expositions of St. Thomas' teachings, not of mine.

On another of the cardinal problems of political science, however, St. Thomas provides us with a full and very interesting discussion, *viz.*, that of the best form of government. I know it has been customary amongst a certain school of modern writers to make little of this controversy, as useless and unpractical. There is no such thing, they tell us, as a best form absolutely. That is best which suits in any particular set of circumstances. But then, there are such things as normal circumstances, and for these the question, particularly when new constitutions are being framed, may be of enormous importance. The problem then may be put in this way: what is the best form normally

or for ordinary circumstances? To which question St. Thomas answers with a distinction. The best absolutely, he tells us, will be that of government by one perfect man, a man perfectly equipped with all that is required as necessary for successful rule. He admits, however, that men of this kind are not to be found amongst ordinary mortals, and therefore the question remains of the form of government that is normally best, not in the abstract but practically, and taking men as they are. And to this he gives the answer, which in outline is well known to all of you, that the best will be a mixed form consisting of a blend of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. It is a simple answer, but I find that the terms of it are not always rightly understood. By monarchy or kingship St. Thomas does not mean, necessarily, the rule of the hereditary monarch. That form of monarchy he does not positively exclude. But as a matter of fact in the *Summa Theologica* he speaks of two forms of monarchy only,[1] *viz.*, that in which the monarch is specially designated by God, and that in which he is elected by the people. By monarchy, St. Thomas means simply the rule of one, and the rule of one is maintained whether the monarch is elected or succeeds by hereditary right, and whether his rule is permanent or temporary. At present most monarchs are hereditary: but in the past kings have often been elected, *e.g.*, the king of the Poles. At present presidents are elected for brief periods, but some presidents have ruled for life, and have been allowed to nominate their successors, like Juan Shi Kai in China. In all these cases, however, you have the rule of one, and that is

[1] Other forms are discussed in the Commentary on Aristotle's Politics.

all St. Thomas means when he says that monarchy or kingship has a place in the best form.

By aristocracy, again, he means government by the few. He does not contemplate such a thing as an hereditary aristocracy, but only an aristocracy *secundum virtutem*, an aristocracy of merit, and the only aristocracy of which he takes cognizance in the *Summa* is one elected by the people and from the people, on the basis of the qualities necessary for good government. The democratic element also is necessarily present in such a form of government, because the people both elect the few who are to rule them, and the few are chosen from out of the people. Between them these will form the supreme administration and supreme legislature. Of a second legislative chamber he makes no mention, but if he did discuss the question, I fancy that, given one house specially elected on the ground of merit, he would reject the second as unnecessary, and possibly also as pernicious.

You will agree, I think, from this short account of his teaching on the best form of government, that St. Thomas is very modern in his outlook. Indeed, the very first condition which he lays down as essential for successful civil government is that the people should participate in it. Remember, however, that all this is very far removed from the controversy whether civil authority is from the people. Even in the case of the most extreme republics the question may still be raised whether the authority of the ruler is from the people, or is derived from and is an attribute of the position of the ruler. These two questions are quite distinct, and, as I said, St. Thomas discusses only one of them, *i.e.*, the question of the merits of an elected government.

There is another problem of political science which I should like to mention, not only on account of its own importance, but also because of its special interest for those attending the Summer School. I am sure that it will be a source of special pleasure to Englishmen to find that, in one of the most important branches of political science, the traditional thinking of your own people has been confirmed by reasoning coming down from the thirteenth century, and from such an authority as St. Thomas Aquinas. The following passages from Edmund Burke you will at once accept as reflecting the true abiding spirit of English political thought from the earliest period even to our own day. Writing of the permanency of English laws he says:

You will observe that from Magna Carta to the Declaration of Rights it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties as an entailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers. . . This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection, or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection or above it. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity who never look back to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of transmission without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquisition free: but it secures what it acquires . . . By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges in the same manner as we transmit our lives and our property . . . Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the

great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole at one time is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but in a condition of unchangeable constancy moves on through the varied tenour of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of state, in what we improve we are never wholly new; in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete.

The passage is intended as an exposition of England's policy in regard to the constitution. I could quote others to show that the same policy obtains in regard to ordinary laws. But reading them I cannot help recalling those remarkable articles of the *Summa Theologica*[1] in which St. Thomas discusses the question of the mutability of human law. Laws, he first tells us, are changed by human reason. But human reason developes only gradually—*humanae rationi naturale videtur ut gradatim ab imperfecto ad perfectum perveniat.* They change also as the wants of men change, and I think you will agree that the great wants change slowly. Then comes the central question—should laws always be changed whenever the new provision is better than the old? That, after all, is the great crucial problem of modern politics, a problem of permanent urgency for all parliaments and for all parties. It gives us the chief dividing line between the two schools into which all political thinkers and all groups of politicians are divided—the party of conservatism and that of ultra-progressivism. And in answer to it we find St. Thomas, like the great thinkers of your country, taking up high conservative, but surely not reactionary ground. Every change of law, he says, works some harm in breaking with the roots of custom. A law gathers power from

[1] I–II. qq. 96 and 97.

custom, and therefore it should not be lightly set aside even for some good object. If it must be changed, the good effected by it should always be such as will counterbalance the evil inseparable from change, and the necessity of change should be obvious.

As a final reference to his politics I should like to say one word on that wonderful article of the *Summa Theologica* in which St. Thomas shows the relation of the civil to natural law. The civil law is derived from the natural in every case, for it consists either in a re-enforcement of a purely natural precept, like the laws against murder and stealing, or in a more particular determination of a very general requirement of nature, like that requiring a man to pay direct taxes, where the natural law only requires that the State be supported in some way. If you look well into the matter you will find that every useful civil law is related to the natural law and promotes some natural good in either of these two ways.

And the resulting lesson is one of immense importance for the world—particularly the world of today, when society is threatened with dissolution from so many sources. The natural law is the great abiding foundation on which legislators must build, if society is to stand and not to crumble to pieces before our eyes. If disintegration has already begun (and will any man of serious purpose manitain that the great fastenings have not of late years been loosened?) the fault lies largely with our statesmen, who in many departments of the public life have thought so much of the passing interests of party, and the caprice of passion, and so little of the great permanent aims and purposes of nature. We saw

just one example in our discussion this morning on divorce.

Indeed, were the world to be ruled by statesmen alone, I may say that I should see no future for society but one that instinctively we all fear to contemplate. Fortunately, however, the natural law has one uncompromising defender, that can still restrain the governments of the world, even those least willing to acknowledge her divine authority, one who by the example of her own immaculate law can still keep them within the bounds of decency, if not of reason and religion, or indict them before the world when her example fails to restrain, and that is the Catholic Church. She alone has been loyal. Her loyalty, as you know, is first of all to God, who is the author of nature, and secondly to nature itself; and therefore the law of nature is safe in her keeping.

This brings our discussion to a close. I can only hope that at your leisure you will read St. Thomas for yourselves—both his general ethics, and his social and political philosophy. I promise you it will repay the trouble. And I shall be glad to think that in your reading you will be supplementing the little I have been able to say to you in these lectures. For, after all, it is very little that one can say on subjects so large and many-sided in two brief hours.

VI.

THE ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL TEACHING OF ST. THOMAS.

By the Rev. A. B. Sharpe, M.A.

Among the works of St. Thomas there is nothing in the nature of a systematic treatise on Christian Asceticism. The Saint's object in all his writings is to give a reasoned account of Christian doctrine, to show that it is the legitimate and necessary outcome of Revelation, and to answer the various objections that are or might conceivably be brought against it. His purpose, as he tells us at the beginning of the *Summa*, is primarily speculative[1], since his subject is divine truth; it is practical in so far as divine truth indicates the conduct on the part of human beings that is necessary for the attainment of their true and final end. Asceticism, on the contrary, is the method by which the human soul must fulfil God's purpose for it, by so carrying out the divine precepts as to live in the progressive knowledge and love of God in this life, and to reach the complete fruition of His presence in the life to come.

Asceticism, therefore, rests on a dogmatic basis, since it is only from the Christian revelation that the way to God can be fully known; but its subject-matter is the application of the divine commands to the varying circumstances of life and the endlessly different idiosyncracies of individual character. St. Thomas provides

[1] *Summa* I. 1. 4.

the foundation in dogma and morals, but he leaves, generally speaking, to others the particular application of the principles which he lays down, and which, as he says, are envisaged by them only in special relation to the subject in hand.[1] Thus, for example, St. Thomas will explain the nature of a sin by showing that it is in some sense contrary to the nature of God, and is directly or inferentially forbidden by the divine law. From the purely speculative or rational point of view, this is all there is to be said about it; but at this point the ascetic theologian takes up the subject: he enlarges on the evil involved in the sin, points out how temptation to it arises, and how it appeals to different natural temperaments; and he proceeds to indicate safeguards and remedies, perhaps illustrating his points by anecdotes, more or less historical, or by analogies drawn from other subjects. There is very little of this kind in St. Thomas, who appeals neither to the imagination nor to the emotions, but to the intellect alone.

But his preoccupation with speculative theology, though it imparts a peculiar character to his ascetical teaching, by no means impairs his value as a spiritual guide, but in one respect rather enhances it, namely, by setting the duties and privileges of the spiritual life in immediate relation to the revealed truths from which they arise. For the response which revelation demands from man, and the means by which he is enabled to render it, form a considerable part of the subject-matter of revelation, and naturally entail some consideration both of the powers, natural and supernatural, with which man is endowed for that purpose, and of the manner in which those powers are to be used. On the

[1] *Summa : Prologus.*

other hand, St. Thomas has to follow the order of treatment that properly belongs to revealed truth in its speculative aspect, which differs considerably from that in which it is regarded from the practical side. His ascetical teaching is therefore in some degree unsystematic, and has to be gathered from different parts of his work; it is not presented to the reader, as the speculative system of the *Summa* is, in the form of an organic whole. Nevertheless St. Thomas provides an adequate solution of all problems of the spiritual life, for those who will be at the pains to look a little below the surface, and submit his works to a kind of Baconian cross-examination. In this way it can be seen that the wide comprehensiveness with which he treats dogmatic and moral theology is fully shared by his teaching in regard to ascetics. In all that he has written—not less in his smaller treatises than in the *Summa*, which may be regarded as a compendium of them all—he keeps God always in view as the beginning and the end: as the source of all being, the sustainer and director of every movement of a dynamic universe, and the end to which all eventually returns. The mysteries of creation, redemption and the consummation of the world are seen as moments in a vast design, in which the divine purpose for the race and for each separate member of it may be discerned. St. Thomas' outlook on the field of dogmatic and speculative theology is in fact one with his view of the spiritual possibilities of the individual life. His guidance for the realization of these possibilities for the most part takes the form of statements of principle, in the 'dry light' of abstract thought, and without any of the ornaments of rhetoric or of descriptive colouring; and it stands in relation to detailed problems as general

to particular, or as abstract definition to concrete illustration. But the principles are so clearly and fully enunciated that their bearing on practical questions in detail is generally unmistakable. It is due to the influence, direct or indirect, of St. Thomas, that ascetics have been treated since his time with a completeness and breadth of view that are in marked contrast with the fragmentary and incidental character of earlier treatises. Ascetic writers, again, because they necessarily address their readers in terms of contemporary knowledge and modes of thought, inevitably tend to become antiquated by lapse of time. The substance of their work may, indeed, be perennially fresh and solid; but the manner of its presentation, though a help to its assimilation by contemporaries, has frequently come to have the opposite effect on later generations. But the ascetical system held, as it were, in solution by St. Thomas' works can never suffer in this way. It owes nothing but its clearness to its method; its cogency is derived solely from its truth to reality. Though it may have little of the persuasiveness of such human documents as the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, or the *Fioretti*, its pregnant brevity has a convincingness of its own, and can no more become antiquated than the Faith or the human soul.

St. Thomas, like St. Bonaventure, regards human life as a journey to God. Its natural and legitimate end is union with God by perfect love. That is so, because human nature, like everything else, has its own final perfection, at which it must eventually arrive if no insuperable obstacle is placed in its way. But man's perfection must consist primarily in the action of his intelligence, since intelligence is the distinctive quality

in virtue of which he is man, and not some other kind of creature (*ex quo habet quod homo est*).[1] His intellectual perfection, however, does not consist in a perfect degree of knowledge, for in degrees of knowledge there can be no finality, and so no ultimate perfection; but in a certain kind of knowledge, *i.e.*, the knowledge of that which is itself absolutely perfect, namely God. This knowledge is what man naturally desires and seeks as his last end, and is thus at once the reward of his search, the satisfaction of his desire and the source of his eternal delight. In other words, though the apprehension of God is necessarily the immediate act of the intellect, yet intellect and will co-operate in the joy of man's final beatitude.[2]

The journey is not made in solitude; man in his present state has no power to make it by himself. He is guided and supported at every step by God, through the various agencies which the Incarnation has made available.[3] The spiritual life is thus in some sense a development; it begins by union with God through faith, hope and charity;[4] and that union becomes more and more complete the nearer the end is approached, and the more fully the soul is disposed to receive the supernatural gifts that are at its service from the beginning.

The union so begun has to be strengthened and at last perfected by the performance of what, in the widest sense, are called good works. For things have been so ordained by divine wisdom that beatitude can be reached by creatures only by the way of merit: it is connatural only to God himself, but must be earned by all creatures

[1] *De Verit.* 18.
[2] *Quodl.* 8. 19; *Summa* I. 26. 2; I-II. 3. 4.
[3] *Summa* I–II. 5. [4] *S.* I–II. 4. 3.

through actions appropriate to their natures. The angels merited beatitude by a single moral act; human beings must do so by a lifelong continuance in the various good works for which they are naturally fitted.[1] For this purpose certain virtues, infused and congenital, are required. They are God's gifts, by nature and grace, and St. Thomas explains and analyses them at great length. The practice of all virtues, in one way or another, is of course absolutely necessary for perfection; but the consideration of them belongs rather to the province of moral theology than to that of ascetical, which is concerned chiefly with those relations of the soul with God, from which arises the true incentive to right moral conduct.

We observe here that though ideally the life of the soul may be represented as an orderly and continuous progress towards its end, it is in fact very much more. For the motives on which the action of the will depends are many and complicated, and the natural desire of man for perfection is frequently obscured and misdirected by the powers of evil to other objects which, though in some aspects desirable, are nevertheless obstacles to its fulfilment. The human will is determined to good, and can choose nothing but what appears to the intellect to be good: but the world, the flesh and the devil continually deceive man as to the nature of good and the means by which it is to be obtained. So man is tempted to sin, and much of his life on earth has to be of the nature of a struggle with evil; whence it is necessary that the senses, through which he is mostly led astray, should be disciplined and restrained. Further, since the evil we have to avoid is, in St. Thomas' view as in

[1] *S.* I–II. 7.

the neoplatonist, not a substantive thing but a negation —the 'privation' of something that ought to be there, not the addition of something that ought not[1]—the mind has to be fixed continually on the true end of life, and the will must be constantly set towards it, to the exclusion of the specious but misleading aims suggested to it. Hence, no doubt, comes the popular misunderstanding of asceticism, which in the minds of many, and of a recent writer in particular, appears to be concerned mainly or entirely with the practice of corporal austerities.

By the use of such means, with the aid of divine grace, obtained through prayer and the sacraments and through the general exercise of the virtue of religion, we may successfully resist temptation, though we cannot escape it. In this way the struggle with evil becomes of direct assistance towards the attainment of our final end, inasmuch as it has the character of a purgation from spiritual defects, a probation by which the soul is strengthened, and a source of merit.[2] Thus the labour and even suffering involved in resistance to evil are repaid; and it may be remembered in this connexion that St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross emphasize strongly the advantage and the practical necessity of those periods of trial and purgation, by which the soul is fitted for the higher stages of the spiritual life.

Further, because of the frailty of human nature, man is subject to many imperfections, and is unable entirely to avoid at least venial sin. Therefore the virtue of penitence is a necessary accompaniment and condition of the soul's progress. For penitence, though in its

[1] *S.* I. 14. 10; 49. 3.
[2] *S.* III. 41. 2; 27. 3; *S.* I–II. 57 1.

beginnings it may chiefly be due to servile fear, yet in the later and higher stages in which alone it is truly efficacious it is the outcome of filial reverence,[1] which endures even in the state of beatitude.[2] Thus, we may notice, is explained the well-known fact, which at first sight is difficult to understand, that penitence increases in proportion as the soul approaches perfection.

But perfection, in its full sense of complete union with God, is not attainable in this life. For it consists in an entire concentration and absorption of the soul's powers in God—and this under the conditions of life in this world is impossible. But there is an approximate perfection which is a preparation for that which is to come hereafter, and consists in the exclusion from the affections not only of all that is opposed to the love of God, but of all that can in any way hinder the entire devotion of the soul to Him.[3] Devotion, it must be noticed, is with St. Thomas not a mere passing sentiment, but an act of the will in which the soul dedicates itself entirely to the service of God; it is thus the immediate motive of the virtue of religion.[4] Perfection in this sense is possible in this life, and it is in this sense only that perfection can be attributed either to any state of life, or to any person while yet on earth. Any one, no matter what his condition, can aspire and attain to this kind of perfection. But certain states of life are called perfect, because the object of their institution is to lead souls to become perfect, and consequently they impose on those who enter upon them an obligation to aim at perfection. Others, which have no such exclusive design, impose no such obligation, but leave their

[1] *S.* III. 85. 5.
[2] *S.* I–II. 67. 4, 2.
[3] *S.* II–II. 184.
[4] *S.* II–II. 82. 1, 2.

followers free either to aim at the highest state or to be content with a lower one. Thus one may be perfect in an imperfect state of life, and imperfect in a perfect one. But everyone is bound at least to aim at the degree of perfection proper to his state; that is, he may aim either at entire devotion to God alone, which is perfection, or at worldly objects with the intention of thereby serving God, which is imperfection; but he may not desire worldly things wholely and solely for their own sake, because that is neither perfection nor imperfection, but perversity.[1]

The highest act of which man's natural powers are capable is prayer; for prayer is directly a function of the intellect, and only mediately of the will; it is therefore the one action peculiar to man as man, whence its dignity and its merit. It is divided into vocal and mental; and again, into petition, meditation, or the consideration of the various truths of religion with the intention of regulating conduct in accordance with them; and contemplation, which is the concentration of the mind on divine truth and thereby on God Himself. This last, though it is possible here only in an imperfect degree, is nevertheless the beginning of the perfect contemplation of those who see God 'face to face' and 'as He is.' The delight it brings is the same in kind as that which attends the Beatific Vision, and consists in the satisfaction of the desire to behold God which those who love Him feel. Contemplation thus arises from the action of the will in the first instance, because the intellect, though it is the faculty by which God is contemplated, is nevertheless moved by the will; desire is the function of the will, and joy is experienced through its satisfaction.[2]

[1] *S.* I–II. 6; *S.* II–II. 186. 2, 2. [2] *S.* II–II. 180. 1.

The contemplative life is that in which contemplation predominates, and the active life that in which good works are the chief element. But each necessarily contains something of the other, and thus each is in some sense a 'mixed' life; there are therefore according to St. Thomas, who here differs from some other authorities, not three but only two kinds of life, contemplative and active: the mixed life being reducible to one or other of these two. The contemplative life is in itself the more perfect and the more meritorious, since it is concerned directly with God; whereas the active life has to do with Him mediately, through the service of one's neighbour; the one, moreover, endures when this life is over, but the other must end at death. All, however, are not fitted for the contemplative life; and under particular circumstances the active life may be more perfect and meritorious than the contemplative.[1]

St. Thomas thus reviews the whole course of the spiritual life, from its beginning in the new birth of baptism to its consummation in the contemplation of God, which in its fulness is to be the soul's occupation in eternity. His view of the process, which is given in great detail, though he regards it rather from its divine than from its human side, has become the starting-point and as it were the text of all Catholic exponents of the subject. He has not always been followed in some of his speculative doctrines, especially those referring to the exact relations between intellect and will. But such differences hardly affect the value of the scheme, which is indeed followed in its entirety by nearly all ascetical theologians.

[1] *S.* II–II. 182. On the religious life in general, see the reply of St. Thomas to William of St. Amour, *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem.* (Opusc. I.)

From the outline I have endeavoured to give of St. Thomas' teaching on Ascetics it will, I think, have been evident that he follows throughout his principle of intellectualism. The intellect is the distinctive factor in human nature; on its action depend both the choice of the end, whether true or false, right or wrong, and the selection of the means for its attainment; it is the immediate agent in prayer and contemplation in this life, and will still be the immediate agent in the beatitude of the future. It is from the intellect that volition and emotion proceed; we must know before we can either desire or love, and in the perfect state the intellect will know God as He is, without any intermediary whatever.[1]

But, important as is the position of intellectual contemplation in St. Thomas' system, there is no trace in it of anything resembling Quietism. The mind is moved by the same energy of desire which issues also in active good works: it is in the satisfaction of the will that the joy of contemplation consists. The aspirant to perfection must be strenuous and virile: the whole man is to be in a state of continuous activity, in which each of the powers of soul and body takes its appropriate part.

Again, it is to be noticed that the due proportion between end and means is always kept clearly in view: one is never lost sight of in the other. Prayer, meditation, fasting, good works and the evangelical counsels are all valued only as conducing to the final beatitude of man in God, and apart from that are worthless. Nor is the inexhaustible variety of human nature ever forgotten; the end is for all men, whatever may be their circumstances or natural disposition. Every state and

[1] *De Ver.* 20. 3.

character has its own kind of perfection, to be reached by an appropriate use of the means that are common to all.

Up to this point St. Thomas has been tracing the normal development and functioning of the natural powers, under the influence of grace. They reach their highest form of activity in contemplation. But here a kind of knowledge higher than any of which the unassisted intelligence is capable is sometimes attainable by divine communications in the form of mental images of various kinds, such as those that occur in the visions of the prophets.[1] Similar experiences, it may be remarked, have occurred to later contemplatives, such as Julian of Norwich, St. Teresa, St. Margaret Mary, and many others; and the well-known story of the crucifix that spoke to St. Thomas himself seems to fall under the same head. Here the natural powers still act in a normal way, though they do so under a special supernatural impulse.

But there is a still higher state, in which the intellect is exalted to the supernatural plane, and acts in a manner wholly abnormal. In this state the beatitude of the saints is anticipated in this life, and God is seen *per essentiam* or 'as He is.'[2] This state is called 'Rapture', because in it the soul is carried away (*rapitur*) from its normal conditions by overmastering divine power. St. Thomas compares it with the condition brought about by corporal agency—we may suppose such as drugs, anæsthetics or delirium—here curiously anticipating some remarks of the late William James.[3] But

[1] *S.* I. 12. 13.

[2] *Contemplatio Dei est dupliciter. Una per creaturas, quae imperfecta est . . . quae tamen est felicitas viae. Est alia Dei contemplatio, qua videtur immediate per suam essentiam; et haec perfecta est, quae erit in patria et est homini possibilis secundum fidei suppositionem.* Com. in Prolog. Sent. I. 1.

[3] James, *Varieties of Religious Experience.*

St. Thomas' comparison refers only to the externality of the agent and the passivity of the subject: there is no resemblance between the states induced. The historical examples are Moses and St. Paul; of the former we read that he spoke with God 'face to face,' and the latter records that he was rapt into the 'third heaven,' whether in the body or out of the body he knew not, and there 'heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter.'

Rapture is thus 'the highest stage of contemplation in this life.'[1] But it is not, like the contemplation already described, a natural human function performed under the influence of ordinary grace (*lumen gratiae*), but rather a 'passion' than a function, or a state of receptivity rather than activity. It is, again, a *gratia gratis data*, not *gratum faciens*-- a distinction of some importance in the consideration of claims to similar experiences made on behalf of others than orthodox Catholics. With these, however, we are not now concerned; St. Thomas makes no mention of them.

This kind of knowledge or vision of God was believed occasionally to occur by several earlier writers than St. Thomas. It was the theme of the treatise by pseudo-Dionysius on Mystical Theology. St. Augustine asserted that 'the human mind can be caught up by divine power out of this life into the life of the angels before it is freed from the body by death.'[2] Hugo of St. Victor speaks of 'a most blessed vision, enjoyed by few in this life, in which, carried away by the excessive sweetness of divine joy, they contemplate God alone. Herein the mind is irradiated by the splendour of the eternal light; it abandons itself, and wholly and solely, naked

[1] *S.* II–II. 180. 5. [2] *Ep. ad Paulinam*, 13.

and undefiled, passes into God, without matter, without form and without distraction.'[1] According to Richard of St. Victor, 'there is a kind of contemplation which the perfect in this life can have, though very rarely (*vix habere possunt*), but which the elect of both men and angels will have in the life to come.'[2] John Scotus Erigena, again, likens the vision of God which 'the just in ecstasy have even in this life' to that which the angels now enjoy, and which the just will share with them hereafter. But he thinks that neither men nor angels nor any creature whatever can see God as He is in Himself, but only through some divinely granted 'theophany.'[3] It seems probable that Erigena had in mind not precisely the actual vision of God, but an adequate comprehension of Him, which St. Thomas also holds to be impossible for any creature.[4]

No earlier theologian, however, has attempted any precise explanation of the way in which this sublime cognition is made possible. But the Aristotelian psychology, in St. Thomas' hands, provides an explanation which, though it may perhaps be regarded as conjectural, is at any rate in remarkable accord with the less transcendental part of St. Thomas' system. I will try to give a short account of it.

No creature, as we have already noticed, can by the use of creaturely powers see God directly as He is. We can indeed infer God's existence from the existence of creatures, and by the same means we can obtain some knowledge of His nature, though negatively *per viam remotionis*: *i.e.*, by learning what He is not, rather

[1] *De Contemplatione et ejus speciebus.*
[2] *De Gratia Contemplationis.*
[3] *De Divisione Naturae* I. 8.
[4] *S.* I. 12. 7.

than what He is. We can perceive *that* God is in this way, but not *what* He is—our natural knowledge of Him cannot be 'quidditative.' We cannot so know or see Him as actually present, though by faith we are certain that He is so. The reason is, not merely that God is a spirit, and therefore cannot be perceived by the senses—for there is here no question in any case of sense-perception; but that we have no faculty or power that can be used for that purpose. That this is so may be understood from the way in which ordinary human knowledge is acquired. We perceive objects primarily through the senses, and through what is called the 'common sense,' which so to speak collects and compares the data of the special senses; a *species* or likeness of the object is impressed on our minds (*species impressa*), from which by intellectual action (*intellectus agens*) we form our idea of the thing before us. This species or image, it must be remembered, is not the thing we perceive, but the means by which we perceive it—by which, so to speak, the thing perceived gets into our minds, so that we know it as present before us. If, therefore, we could perceive God, we should necessarily perceive Him in this way. But we cannot so perceive Him, because there can be no true image or species of God. For, first, God is immaterial, and therefore cannot be discerned through the senses; and secondly, even if a *species* could be communicated to our minds by supernatural power, it would not be a true image of God, and so could not enable us directly to perceive Him The reason why there can be no true image of God is that such an image would be a self-contradiction; but God cannot contradict Himself. For God essentially exists: His 'essence' and 'existence' are one. There is nothing else of which

this is true: we can make a true (though not necessarily complete) mental image of anything else the nature of which we know, and the picture will be a real likeness of the thing, though not the thing itself. But any image of God must be unlike Him, because it must leave out the essential element of His being, *viz.*, His actual existence—as if instead of a picture of a man we were shown a list of his abstract qualities. On the other hand, if we could make a true mental image of God, it would be one in which God really existed—in fact, another God, which is of course unimaginable. We can, of course, think of God as necessarily existing, but we do not thereby impart real existence to our thought of Him; our thought is a mental description or definition but not an image. And we can perceive or imagine something that has a certain resemblance to what we know of Him—as we ourselves are made in God's image-or we can attribute to Him such qualities as fatherhood, love, power, goodness or wisdom. But these are, as St. Thomas says, analogies, not real likenesses.[1] Even the first man in the state of innocence could not see God by his natural powers.[2] St. Thomas supposes that he had a special knowledge of Him through a divinely given light as a medium. This was a kind of image of God, and the knowledge or vision so imparted was more perfect than any we can have now, or than Adam could have after the Fall. But it was *similitudo expressa lucis increatae,* not *lux increata* itself: and *expressa* signifies that it was something prepared or shaped by God for its special purpose, somewhat as the likeness (*species expressa*) of things seen by us is prepared by the active intellect. Thus it was by a mediate and not a direct

[1] *De Verit.* 8. 1. [2] *S.* I. 94. 1.

vision that Adam saw God, not *per essentiam* or 'as He is.'[1]

How then can the soul see God, either by a transient and exceptional experience, as in this life, or habitually and permanently, as in the Beatific Vision? St. Thomas answers that it is possible, in either case, only by the substitution of the divine reality for the *species* or mental image of ordinary cognition. For since no *species* can be a true image of God, and since the soul can be aware of any external object only by some kind of contact or union of the object with itself, such as is provided in ordinary cognition by the *species*, it follows that the vision of God must occur by means of an actual union between the soul and God. Thus the soul sees God immediately, not *per speciem* as other objects are seen and known, but *per essentiam*, or 'as He is.'

Though this union is unique and altogether transcendental in character, it nevertheless harmonizes exactly with the psychological system adopted by St. Thomas from Aristotle; and he has ready, in that system, an example of the kind of union which he conceives between God and soul, in the doctrine of matter and form. Matter is the element in virtue of which things exist in the world: form is that which makes them what they are, and not something else. Though matter primarily belongs to the constitution of what we call material things, yet the relation of matter and form may subsist between existences neither of which is material, but which are so related to each other and constitute an integral whole by their union. The intellect and its content—its thoughts or ideas—are an illustration of this combination: the content of the intellect is

[1] *De Verit.* 18. 1.

form, the intellect itself matter. An empty mind would be practically nothing, but only a potentiality of something, as matter itself is practically nothing, and becomes an actual thing only when united with a form. Thus, according to St. Thomas, God in rapture and in the Beatific Vision acts as form to the soul as matter, and so makes the soul one with Himself; and in virtue of this essential union, the soul knows God in the act of knowing itself,[1] just as in ordinary knowledge the mind knows the thoughts it contains, and itself, in one single act.[2]

This vision of God, though direct and immediate, can take place only by means of the *lumen gloriae*, which enables the soul to see God, as natural light enables the eye to perceive natural objects, or as the light of the active intellect (*intellectus agens*) enables the mind to know what is perceived through the senses.[3] By this light the mind is exalted to a higher energy than is natural to it: but its constitution is not changed; no new faculties are given to it.

The same account is given by St. Thomas of the vision of God by angels, by the blessed, and by men on earth in the state of rapture. Nevertheless rapture is not the same thing as the Beatific Vision. It differs from it, first, in that it is not a permanent but a transient state; it is not the normal activity of the soul, as the vision of the blessed has come to be, but is what St. Thomas calls *passio, i.e.*, one in which the soul is subjected to a kind of violence by the divine power, which places it for the time being under conditions that are as yet not proper to it. It is, so to speak, artificial, as the sense

[1] *Ibid.* 8. 1. [2] *S.* I. 12. 11, 4.
[3] *Quodl.* 7. 1; *S.* I. 12. 5.

of health may be in an invalid under the influence of a powerful stimulant. Secondly, the body has no part, direct or indirect, in the state of rapture; because in that state the intellect does not depend on sense-experience (*phantasma*) as it does in ordinary knowledge, but on a purely spiritual object. It is therefore for the time abstracted from the senses, and unconscious of sensation. Thus St. Paul knew not whether he was 'in the body or out of the body.' St. Teresa in the same way underwent her transcendental experiences in a state which she calls a trance. But in the Beatific Vision the soul reacts (*redundat*) on the body, which thus partakes of the soul's beatitude.[1] The soul in rapture is not *simpliciter beata* but only *secundum quid*.

As to the content of this temporary vision, it is to be noted that St. Paul says the things he heard in it were 'not granted to man to utter.' St. Thomas' opinion is that this was because St. Paul could neither think of nor express in words what he had experienced; the reason being that, though he could remember the experience in some degree by means of certain 'intelligible species' remaining in his mind, he could not, on returning to his normal condition, relate them to any 'phantasm' or sense-image; and since both thought and speech are based on such images, it was impossible either to apprehend or to speak of them in anything like an adequate manner.[2] Here it would seem that St. Thomas gives an explanation of the difficulty felt by the more exalted contemplatives in describing their experiences, and their reluctance to make the attempt—a reluctance that generally could be overcome only by a drastic

[1] *S.* II–II. 3. 4; *Expos. in 2 Cor.* XII.
[2] *S.* II–II. 175. 4, 3.

exercise of spiritual authority. St. Thomas observes also that in these states Christ must be seen primarily in His divine nature, though the Sacred Humanity is naturally included in the vision.

I have purposely refrained so far from using the term mystical or mysticism, and from indicating any point in St. Thomas' system at which his teaching may be said to become mystical. St. Thomas himself makes no such distinction, and he does not use the word at all, except in one place, where he does so only by way of quotation, without making the word his own or attaching to it any specific meaning.[1] Referring to the 'Mystical Theology' of Dionysius, he quotes the words *circa mysticas visiones sensus derelinque*, and says that since the consideration of divine things is certainly mystical, and there is therefore no place in it for the senses, there can be no place in it either for the imagination, which belongs to the senses. The 'consideration' he speaks of seems to be rather the natural contemplation which makes use of sense-images but does not rest in them, than the supernatural state in which the intellect is altogether divorced from sense. Nothing, I think, can be learned from an *obiter dictum* like this as to what in St. Thomas' opinion is the correct use of the word. The question really is whether we should restrict the term 'mysticism' to the transcendental and supernatural state called rapture by St. Thomas, or should apply it indiscriminately to contemplation of every sort. In the one sense, no doubt mystics, properly so called, are of very rare occurrence: in the other, any moderately devout Christian may be called a mystic. It should be remembered that the term is certainly used in the

[1] *Opusc.* 63, in Boet. de Trin., 6. 2.

restricted sense by Dionysius, who was the first to apply it to a department of theology.

It is well known that later exponents of this subject trace the development of the soul's experience in the higher states of contemplation or prayer through a number of successive and clearly defined stages. St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, in particular, distinguish the 'prayer of quiet,' the 'prayer of union' 'spiritual espousals,' and 'spiritual marriage.' St. Thomas, as we have seen, distinguishes the various kinds of prayer; but he says nothing about its degrees. He does not forbid us to suppose that the state of rapture may include various degrees of divine experience; but we have already seen that he considers it impossible to describe them, if indeed they exist, in words. The 'schematic' character appears in many different accounts of supernatural prayer; but it is not precisely the same in any two cases, though the writers all agree with one another, and with St. Thomas, in declaring their experiences to be indescribable.

Again, it is generally held by such writers that the union with God occurs in the substance of the soul, variously called 'grund,' 'fünkelein,' 'scintilla' and 'apex mentis,' and not in its powers or faculties. Here also they are anticipated by St. Thomas, though his phraseology is more precise and scientific than theirs.

Union with God, he says, takes place directly through the intellect, and mediately through the will. These are, it is true, powers of the soul rather than the soul itself. But he is careful to observe that the true source of activity (*principium agendi*) is the 'form'; but the 'form' is the 'nature,' and 'nature' is equivalent to 'substance.'[1]

[1] *S.* III. 13. 1.

Therefore God in uniting the intellect to Himself after the manner of the union of matter and form, does really unite Himself with the substance of the soul. That is, in quite simple words, it is not the intellect that knows, or the will that wills, but the soul itself—not 'my will' or 'my intellect,' but I *myself*.

Thus it will be seen that St. Thomas' psychology is consistent throughout, and is able to support him even in his bold attempt to transcend the limits of natural human experience.

Lastly, one would like to know the reason of St. Thomas' remarkable reticence in regard to what he himself calls the 'highest stage of contemplation.' Had he any experience of it in himself, or is he merely theorizing? We cannot tell for certain; he is here, as elsewhere, absolutely impersonal; as always, he writes not about himself but about God. An incident, however, that is recorded by his biographer, William of Tocco, may possibly be held to throw some light on this matter. A few monthe before his death, while saying Mass at Naples, Thomas fell into a kind of trance, from which he was with difficulty aroused by Raynaldus, his *socius*. On awakening, he said, 'Raynaldus, my son, I tell you now something you must never reveal during my lifetime. My writing has come to an end; for such things have now been made known to me that all I have written and taught seems to me of little worth, and I hope in God that as my teaching is over, so my life will soon be.' A witness at the process for his canonization, Bartholomew of Capua, adds that after that Mass he wrote nothing more, and put away his writing materials. To an urgent request from Father Raynaldus that he would continue his work, he only replied, 'All that I have written

seems to me rubbish compared with what I have seen and heard.[1]

We may, I think, suppose, without being unduly fanciful, that Thomas said nothing about what passes in the state of rapture precisely because he knew it by experience. It would seem that the more he learned by divine illumination, the less he could say about it; for when the light had reached its highest degree of brilliancy, its effect was not, as one might have expected, to inspire him with eloquence, but to reduce him to absolute silence.

[1] *Acta Sanctorum:* Mart. tom. I, pp. 672b, 711a. See Wicksteed, *Reactions of Philosophy and Theology*, p. 391.

VII.

ST. THOMAS AND THE REUNION OF CHRISTENDOM.

By the Very Rev. Bede Jarrett, O.P., S.T.L., M.A.

It is not an anachronism to mention in the same sentence St. Thomas and Reunion, for even in his time Christendom was divided. There were the separated Churches of the East, the group of heretics in Southern France and Northern Italy, and the individual leaders in Paris, Bologna, and the other university towns whose teaching was not in accord with orthodox belief. Moreover, beyond the sweep of Christendom, lay the hordes of Heathendom, and within the territories ruled by Christian princes were Jews and Mahometans.

It is at least historically interesting to see how St. Thomas looked out on this unhappy sight and how it affected him.

Perhaps we should note that no one then living could have had any adequate knowledge of the multitudes that lay outside Christendom. With a vague knowledge only of the existence of America, with rumours only of the populous districts of farther Asia, with complete ignorance of the bulk of Africa and the whole of Australasia, the mediæval Christian never knew how small a minority of the world acknowledged the truths of his Faith. At times he imagined his own world was the larger world, his people the more numerous, his religion

the most considerable. Thus, the conversion of the globe to Christ was not put in quite the same imaginative terms to him as it is to us. He was not stunned by gigantic statistics of Buddhists, Mahometans, and pagans as we are apt to be. The world seemed simpler to him than it does to us, simpler than it really was.

But let us take first what St. Thomas has to say about heathens, where exactly he blames them, and what should be in his opinion the attitude towards them of the good Christian. We shall find, as we do this, that he gives us at once his characteristic principles, clear, rigid, and humane.

Unbelief may be taken in two ways; first by way of pure negation, so that a man may be called an unbeliever, merely because he has not the Faith. Secondly, unbelief may be taken by way of opposition to the Faith; in which sense a man refuses to hear the Faith or despises it, according to Isai. liii. 1, *Who hath believed our report?* It is this that completes the notion of unbelief, and it is in this sense that unbelief is a sin. If, however, we take it by way of pure negation, as we find it in those who have heard nothing about the Faith, it bears the character not of sin, but of punishment, because suchlike ignorance of Divine things is the result of the sin of our first parents. If suchlike unbelievers are damned, it is on account of other sins, which cannot be taken away without faith, but not on account of their sin of unbelief. (*Summa Theologica*, II–II. 10. 1, *Engl. trans.*, p. 121.)

Having thus explained what he means by unbelief, St. Thomas proceeds to state its various kinds:

Since the sin of unbelief consists in resisting the Faith, this may happen in two ways:

Either the Faith is resisted before it has been accepted, and such is the unbelief of pagans or heathens;

or the Christian Faith is resisted after it has been accepted,

and this either in figure, and such is the unbelief of the Jews;

or in the very manifestation of truth, and such is the unbelief of heretics.

Hence we may, in a general way, reckon these three as species of unbelief. (*Ibid.*, art. 5, p. 128.)

But besides discussing the kinds of belief, he has also to discuss the degrees of sinfulness in each, for he is writing as a theologian, not as a missionary; or perhaps we should say he is writing as a theologian for missionaries.

Two things may be considered in unbelief. One of these is its relation to faith; and from this point of view, he who resists the Faith after accepting it sins more grievously against faith than he who resists it without having accepted it, even as he who fails to fulfil what he has promised sins more grievously than if he had never promised it. In this way the unbelief of heretics, who confess their belief in the Gospel and resist that faith by corrupting it, is a more grievous sin than that of the Jews, who have never accepted the Gospel faith. Since, however, they accepted the figure of that faith in the Old Law, which they corrupt by their false interpretations, their unbelief is a more grievous sin than that of the heathens, because the latter have not accepted the Gospel faith in any way at all. —The second thing to be considered in unbelief is the corruption of matters of faith. In this respect, since heathens err on more points than Jews, and these in more points than heretics, the unbelief of heathens is more grievous than the unbelief of the Jews, and that of the Jews than that of heretics, except in such cases as that of the Manichees, who in matters of faith err even more than heathens do. (*Ibid.*, art. 6, pp. 130–131.)

Next, with the unbeliever who is a heathen, he contrasts the unbeliever who is a heretic, defining wherein lies the exact difference between them:

There are two ways in which a man may deviate from the

rectitude of the Christian Faith. First, because he is unwilling to assent to Christ; and such a man has an evil will, so to say, in respect to the very end. This belongs to the species of unbelief in pagans and Jews. Secondly, because though he intends to assent to Christ, yet he fails in his choice of those things wherein he assents to Christ, because he chooses, not what Christ really taught, but the suggestions of his own mind. Therefore, heresy is a species of unbelief, belonging to those who profess the Christian Faith but corrupt its dogmas. (*Ibid.*, qu. 11, art. 1, pp. 149–150.)

Then very quietly he shows us the root point of all divergence, setting down without warning the essence of all the controversy:

As Augustine states (Ep. 43), *By no means should we accuse of heresy those who, however false and perverse their opinion may be, defend it without obstinate fervour, and seek the truth with careful anxiety, ready to mend their opinion when they have found the truth*, because, to wit, they do not make a choice in contradiction to the doctrine of the Church. Accordingly certain doctors seem to have differed either in matters the holding of which in this or that way is of no consequence, so far as faith is concerned, or even in matters of faith, which were not as yet defined by the Church; although if any one were obstinately to deny them after they had been defined by the authority of the Universal Church, he would be deemed a heretic. This authority resides chiefly in the Sovereign Pontiff.

To support this statement he quotes from the Decretum (*Decret. XXIV.* qu. 1, cap. 12) and from St. Jerome's (Pelagius') *Expositio Symboli* (*ibid.* art. 2, pp. 152-153).

Having seen how St. Thomas establishes the papacy as the centre of unity. let us now look at his method for dealing with unbeliever and heretic:

Among believers there are some who have never received the Faith, such as the heathens and the Jews: and these

are by no means to be compelled to the Faith, in order that they may believe, because to believe depends on the will; nevertheless they should be compelled by the faithful, if it be possible to do so, not to hinder the Faith, by their blasphemies or by their evil persuasions, or even by their open persecutions. It is for this reason that Christ's faithful often wage war with unbelievers, not indeed for the purpose of making them believe, because even if they were to conquer them and take them prisoners, they should still leave them free to believe if they will, but in order to prevent them from hindering the Faith of Christ.—On the other hand there are unbelievers who at some time have accepted the Faith and professed it, such as heretics and all apostates: such should be submitted even to bodily compulsion that they may fulfil what they have promised, and hold what they at one time received. (*Ibid.*, qu. 10, art. 8, pp. 134–135.)

To make his meaning clearer, add these two quotations from his answers to objections:

Those Jews who have in no way received the Faith ought by no means to be compelled to the Faith: if, however, they have received it, they ought to be compelled to keep it. (*Reply to second objection*, p. 135.)

Just as taking a vow is a matter of will, and keeping a vow a matter of obligation, so acceptance of the Faith is a matter of the will, whereas keeping the Faith, when once one has received it, is a matter of obligation. Wherefore heretics should be compelled to keep the Faith. (*Reply to third objection*, pp. 135–6.)

Here then St. Thomas makes a clear distinction between the hereditary unbeliever and the Christian lapsed into unbelief; in the next article he makes use of a remarkable phrase which gives us, I think, the key to his teaching, for he makes the assertion that over the hereditary unbeliever the Church has no spiritual but only a temporal power. You see at once that throughout the whole of this treatise he has been taking for

granted the mediæval polity under which he lived, and has been dealing with a Church visibly ruling over pagans and existing as a living organism in all Christendom:

The Church does not forbid the faithful to communicate with unbelievers who have not in any way received the Christian Faith, *viz.*, with pagans and Jews (*because she has not the right to exercise spiritual judgment over them, but only temporal judgment*), in the case when, while dwelling among Christians, they are guilty of some misdemeanour and are condemned by the faithful to some temporal punishment. (*Ibid.*, qu. 10, art. 9, p. 137.)

But suppose the case be reversed? Suppose Saladin and his successors do now hold power over Christians, are these bound to obey him and his? A practical question, since the defeat of the Latins near Gaza on 7th October in 1244 had let Jerusalem fall again into the hands of the Moslem, and since the Latin Empire of Byzantium in 1261 had ended, and since gradually one by one, almost as St. Thomas was penning his *Summa*, the chief principalities and cities of Palestine were lapsing to the Saracen, behind whom had already appeared the banners of the Turk: Nazareth in 1263, Cæsarea in 1265, Tripoli in 1266, Jaffa and Antioch in 1268, ending with the death of St. Louis at Carthage on 25th August, 1270.

The distinction between faithful and unbelievers, considered in itself, does not do away with dominion and authority of unbelievers over the faithful. Nevertheless this right of dominion or authority can be justly done away with by the sentence or ordination of the Church, who has the authority of God . . . the Church has not applied the law to those unbelievers who are not subject to her or her members in temporal matters, although she has the right to do so. (*Ibid.*, art. 10, pp. 140–141.)

His answer is clear and unmistakable. He is dealing

with a social condition of Christendom in which the Church is acknowledged to have temporal powers. Yet, to repeat, he does not hesitate to assert that over those who have never accepted her teaching, the Church claims no spiritual jurisdiction.

Injustice should be done to no man. Now it would be an injustice to Jews if their children were to be baptized against their will, since they would lose the rights of parental authority over their children as soon as these were Christians. . . . We ought to abide by the authority of the Church rather than that of an Augustine or a Jerome or any doctor whatever. Now it was never the custom of the Church to baptize the children of Jews against the will of their parents. . . . It would be contrary [therefore] to natural justice if a child, before coming to the use of reason, were to be taken away from its parents' custody or anything done to it against its parents' wish. (*Ibid.*, art. 12, p. 145.)

Now turn to those who are not unbelievers but dissident Christians:

With regard to heretics two points must be observed: one, on their own side, the other, on the side of the Church. On their own side, there is the sin, whereby they deserve not only be be separated from the Church by excommunication, but also to be severed from the world by death. For it is a much graver matter to corrupt the Faith which quickens the soul, than to forge money which supports temporal life. Wherefore if forgers of money and other evil-doers are forthwith condemned to death by the secular authority, much more reason is there for heretics, so soon as they are convicted of heresy, to be not only excommunicated, but even put to death. On the part of the Church, however, there is mercy which looks to the conversion of the wanderer, wherefore she condemns not at once, but after the first and second admonition as the Apostle directs (Tit. iii. 10, 11); after that, if he is yet stubborn, the Church, no longer hoping for his conversion, looks to the salvation

of others, by excommunicating him and separating him from the Church, and furthermore delivers him to the secular tribunal to be exterminated thereby from the world by death. (*Ibid.*, qu. 11, art. 3, p. 154.)

He continues in the next article:

In obedience to our Lord's institution the Church extends her charity to all, not only to friends, but also to foes who persecute her, according to Matt. v. 44: *Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you.* Now it is part of charity that we should both wish and work our neighbour's good. Again good is two-fold; one is spiritual, namely, the health of the soul, which good is chiefly the object of charity, since it is this chiefly that we should wish for one another. Consequently, from this point of view, heretics who return after falling no matter how often, are admitted by the Church to Penance, whereby the way of salvation is opened to them.—The other good is that which charity considers secondarily, *viz.*, temporal good, such as the life of the body, worldly possessions, good repute, ecclesiastical or secular dignity, for we are not bound by charity to wish others this good, except in relation to the eternal salvation of them and of others. Hence if the presence of one of these goods in one individual might be an obstacle to eternal salvation in many, we are not bound out of charity to wish such a good to that person, rather should we wish him to be without it, both because eternal salvation takes precedence to temporal good, and because the good of the many is to be preferred to the good of one. Now if heretics were always received on their return, in order to save their lives and other temporal goods, this might be prejudicial to the salvation of others, both because they would infect others if they relapsed again, and because if they escaped without punishment, others would feel more assured in lapsing into heresy. For this reason the Church not only admits to Penance those who return from heresy for the first time, but also safeguards their lives, and sometimes, by dispensation, restores them to the ecclesiastical dignities which they may have had before, should their conversion

appear to be sincere; we read of this as having frequently been done for the good of peace. But when they fall again, after having been received, this seems to prove them to be inconstant in faith, wherefore when they return again, they are admitted to Penance, but are not delivered from the pain of death. (*Ibid.*, qu. 11, art. 4, pp. 156–7.)

Heretics then who have not accepted the teaching of the Faith are to be admitted back to the Church as often as they repent; but if their repentance be not considered sure *and* if evil results be expected in others who watch their repeated lapses, then St. Thomas argues that a Social Code which sentences to death coiners of false money may refuse to save from death those who have counterfeited more valuable currency. It is merely an argument from analogy.

Moreover, the Church is not God, and cannot pretend to know the secrets of human hearts. All that she can do is to use her judgment prudently and, to avoid greater evils, condemn not men's souls but their bodies.

In God's tribunal, those who return are always received, because God is a searcher of hearts, and knows those who return in sincerity. But the Church cannot imitate God in this, for she presumes that those who relapse[1] after being once received are not sincere in their return; hence she does not debar them from the way of salvation, but neither does she protect them from the sentence of death. (*Ibid.*, qu. 11, art. 4: *Reply to first objection*, p.157.)

Take the parallel with unbelief, and consider now the political results of princes who became heretical.

Unbelief in itself is not inconsistent with dominion, since dominion is a device of the law of nations which is a human law: whereas the distinction between believers and

[1] 'Apostacy does not imply a special kind of unbelief, but an aggravating circumstance thereof.' (*Ibid.*, qu. 12, art. 1. *Reply to third objection*, p. 161.)

unbelievers is of Divine right, which does not annul human right. Nevertheless a man who sins by unbelief may be sentenced to the loss of his right of dominion, as also sometimes on account of other sins.—Now it is not within the competency of the Church to punish unbelief in those who have never received the Faith, according to the saying of the Apostle (1 Cor. v. 12): *What have I to do to judge them that are without?* She can, however, pass sentence of punishment on the unbelief of those who have received the Faith: and it is fitting that they should be punished by being deprived of the allegiance of their subjects: for this same allegiance might conduce to great corruption of the Faith, since, as was stated above (p. 161, Prov. vi. 12) *a man that is an apostate . . . with a wicked heart deviseth evil and . . . soweth discord,* in order to sever others from the Faith. Consequently, as soon as sentence of excommunication is passed on a man on account of apostacy from the Faith, his subjects are *ipso facto* absolved from his authority and from the oath of allegiance whereby they were bound to him. (*Ibid.*, qu. 12, art. 2, p. 163.)

To confirm our contention that in the treatise we are discussing St. Thomas supposes the conditions of the Christian polity of his day, we can add this saying of his in the same article:

At that time (under Julian the Apostate) the Church was but recently instituted, and had not, as yet, the power of curbing earthly princes; and so she allowed the faithful to obey Julian the Apostate, in matters that were not contrary to the Faith, in order to avoid incurring a yet greater danger. (*Ibid.*, *Reply to first objection*, p. 163.)

After unbelief and heresy, we come thirdly to schism:

The sin of schism is, properly speaking, a special sin, for the reason that the schismatic intends to sever himself from that unity which is the effect of charity: because charity unites not only one person to another with the bond of supernatural love, but also the whole Church in unity of spirit. Accordingly, schismatics properly so called are

those who wilfully and intentionally separate themselves from the unity of the Church; for this is the chief unity, and the particular unity of the several individuals among themselves is subordinate to the unity of the Church,[1] even as the mutual adaptation of each member of a natural body is subordinate to the unity of the whole body. Now the unity of the Church consists in two things: namely, in the mutual connection or communion of the members of the Church, and again in the subordination of all the members of the Church to the one head, according to Coloss. ii. 18, 19: *puffed up by the sense of his flesh and not holding the Head from which the whole body, by joints and bands, being supplied with nourishment and compacted, groweth unto the increase of God.* Now this Head is Christ Himself, whose Vicegerent in the Church is the Sovereign Pontiff. Wherefore schismatics are those who refuse to submit to the Sovereign Pontiff, and to hold communion with those members of the Church who acknowledge his supremacy. (*Ibid.*, qu. 39, art. 1, p. 492.)

This needs a slight development which is given a few pages further:

Spiritual power is two-fold; the one sacramental, the other a power of jurisdiction. The sacramental power is one that is conferred by some sort of consecration. Now all the consecrations of the Church are immovable so long as the consecrated thing remains: as appears even in inanimate things, since an altar once consecrated is not consecrated again, unless it has been broken up. Consequently such a power as this remains, as to its essence, in the man who has received it by consecration, as long as he lives, even if he falls into schism or heresy: and this is proved from the fact that if he come back to the Church, he is not consecrated anew. Since, however, the lower power ought not to exercise its act, except in so far as it is moved by the higher power, as may be seen also in the physical order, it follows that such persons lose the use of their power,

[1] Here you have the answer St. Thomas gives to those who consider that they should not leave 'the Church of their baptism.'

so that it is not lawful for them to use it. Yet if they use it, this power has its effects in sacramental acts, because therein man acts only as God's instrument, so that sacramental effects are not precluded on account of any fault whatever in the person who confers the Sacrament.—On the other hand, the power of jurisdiction is that which is conferred by a mere human appointment. Such a power as this does not adhere to the recipient immovably: so that it does not remain in heretics and schismatics; and consequently they neither absolve nor excommunicate, nor grant indulgence, nor do anything of the kind, and if they do, it is invalid. Accordingly when it is said that suchlike persons have no spiritual power, it is to be understood as referring either to the second power, or if it be referred to the first power, not as referring to the essence of the power but to its lawful use. (*Ibid.*, art. 3, p. 497.)

But it is necessary before going further to notice the distinction between heresy and schism which St. Thomas gives:

Heresy and schism are distinguished in respect of those things to which each is opposed essentially and directly. For heresy is essentially opposed to faith, while schism is essentially opposed to the unity of ecclesiastical charity. Wherefore just as faith and charity are different virtues, although whoever lacks faith lacks charity, so too schism and heresy are different vices, although whoever is a heretic is also a schismatic, but not conversely. . . . Nevertheless just as the loss of charity is the road to the loss of faith . . . so too schism is the road to heresy. (*Ibid.*, qu. 38, art. 1: *Reply to the third objection*, p. 493.)

Yet of the three forms of unbelief, schism, St. Thomas holds, is the least sinful:

It is evident that unbelief is a sin committed against God Himself, according as He is in Himself the First Truth, on which faith is founded: whereas schism is opposed to ecclesiastical unity, which is a participated good and a lesser good than God Himself. Wherefore it is manifest

that the sin of unbelief is generically more grievous than the sin of schism, although it may happen that a particular schismatic sins more grievously than a particular unbeliever, either because his contempt is greater, or because his sin is a source of greater danger, or for some similar reason. (*Ibid.*, art. 2, p. 495.)

Again:

The good of ecclesiastical unity, to which schism is opposed, is less than the good of Divine truth, to which unbelief is opposed. (*Ibid.*, *Reply to the second objection*, p. 496.)

Yet though it be the least sin of the three in itself, it is the greatest of all sins against the brotherhood of the faithful.

Of all sins committed by man against his neighbour, the sin of schism would seem to be the greatest, because it is opposed to the spiritual good of the multitude. (*Ibid.*, *Reply to the third objection*, p. 496.)

Against the schismatic, as against the heathen and the heretic, compulsion can be used:

A schismatic, as shown above (p. 492), commits a twofold sin: firstly, separating himself from communion with the members of the Church, and in this respect the fitting punishment for schismatics is that they should be excommunicated. Secondly, they refuse submission to the head of the Church, wherefore since they are unwilling to be controlled by the Church's spiritual power, it is just that they should be compelled by the secular power. . . . The Church, when excommunication does not sufficiently restrain certain men, employs the compulsion of the secular arm. (*Ibid.*, qu. 39, art. 4, p. 499.)

Remember so far that in the *Summa Theologica*, from which all our quotations have been made, we are leaning heavily on Scriptural and Church authority; but even in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, chiefly on philosophic

grounds, St. Thomas urges the importance of the Papacy as the centre of unity, and argues, as Mr. Mallock argued, that common sense undoubtedly must consider it the sole bond of visible union in the Christian body.

At the risk of wearying you by sheer abstract argument I venture to transcribe Chap. 76 of the Fourth Book, dated about 1260:

1. It is clear that although the nations are divided into different dioceses and cities, there can be only one Christian people as there is only one Church. But the spiritual people of one diocese require one bishop to be their head. Therefore, the whole Christian people needs one head for the whole Church.

2. Again, to have unity in the Church, the faithful must all agree in faith. But there are bound to be differences of opinion as to what is of faith; yet these differences of opinion would divide the Church were it not held together by the decision of one man. The unity of the Church, therefore, demands that it should be presided over by one man. But Christ would not have left whatever was demanded by its well-being lacking to that Church, which He loved and gave His life for, for even of the Synagogue He said: 'What is there that I ought to do more for my vineyard that I have not done to it?' (Isa. v. 4.) Hence we cannot doubt but that by Christ's ordinance there is one who presides over the whole Church.

3. Moreover, it is beyond doubt that the government of the Church is the best possible, since it was arranged by Him through whom kings and rulers devise just things (Prov. viii. 15). But the best government of a multitude is that it should be ruled by one man. This we know from the purpose of government, namely, peace, for peace and the unity of its subjects is the very purpose of government, and one rather than many must be the most fitting cause of unity. Clearly then must the government of the Church be so arranged that one should preside over the whole Church.

4. Further, the Church militant is after the pattern of the Church triumphant, for John in the Apocalypse saw Jerusalem descending from Heaven, and Moses was told to fashion all things according to the model shown him on the mount. But over the Church triumphant One presides, ruling indeed the whole universe, God; for it is written in the Apocalypse (xxi. 3): 'They shall be His people and He shall be their God.' Therefore, over the Church militant, one should preside. Hence says Osee (i. 11): 'The children of Juda shall be gathered together and the children of Israel likewise, and they shall give themselves one head,' and the Lord said to John (x. 16): 'There shall be one fold and one shepherd.'

If anyone says that the one head and the one Shepherd is Christ, who is the one Spouse of the one Church, this is not a sufficient answer. Take, for example, this parallel. We all acknowledge that it is Christ who perfects the Church's Sacraments, it is He who baptizes, who forgives sin, who is the true priest and who offered Himself on the altar of the Cross and by whose power His Body is daily consecrated, yet He chose ministers to distribute these Sacraments to the faithful, since He would not Himself be visibly present to the faithful. Similarly, because He was to withdraw His visible presence from the Church, He must in His place have committed to another the care of the whole Church. Hence to Peter before He ascended, He said, 'Feed my sheep' (John xxi. 17); and before He suffered, 'Thou being converted confirm my brethren' (Luke xxii. 32), and to him alone promised (Matt. xvi. 19): 'To thee I will give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven,' to show how the power of the keys was to pass through him for the preserving of the unity of the Church.

Nor can it be said that this power did not pass through him to the rest, for beyond question He founded His Church to last all through the ages according to Isaias (ix. 7): 'On the throne of David and on his kingdom He shall sit to confirm it and strengthen it in judgment and justice now and until eternity.' Clearly then He instituted those to be His ministers that through them the power might

pass to their posterity for the benefit of the Church to the end of time: especially since He said Himself: 'Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world' (Matt. xxviii. 20).

Thus is excluded the presumptuous error of those who strive to withdraw themselves from the obedience and subjection of Peter, not recognizing his successor, the Roman Pontiff, to be the Shepherd of the Universal Church.

In 1263, after the *Contra Gentiles* had been written, St. Thomas was definitely appealed to by the Pope in regard to the possible Reunion between East and West. His answer is interesting, for it is nothing else than the review of a creed submitted to him by Pope Urban IV, once patriarch of Jerusalem. He begins by describing the ideal translator, and by confessing that some of the difficulties between West and East were mere questions of language:

Among the Greeks rightly and catholicly it is said that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three hypostases; yet it would not sound rightly amongst the Latins if it were said that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were three substances, although according to the proper meaning of the words *hypostasis* in Greek signifies literally *substantia* in Latin, for amongst the Latins substance is more usually taken to mean essence, which both we and the Greeks would confess to be one in God. . . . Consequently it belongs to the office of a good translator in translating articles of the Catholic Faith, while preserving the thoughts, so to change the words as to keep the phraseology of the language into which they are translated. Just as to explain the articles of Faith word by word would not be to explain them properly, so too their literal translation from one tongue into another would only produce ambiguity. (*Contra Errores Græcorum*, Proemium.)

St. Thomas then proceeds to lay down certain propositions of faith and proves them by quotations drawn

exclusively from the Eastern Fathers and Councils. It must be admitted that the genuineness of some of these quotations can now be successfully challenged, as St. Thomas himself seems to have found out later, for in his final work the *Summa Theologica* his quotations are more critically chosen. The following are the points he sets out to prove :

i. The Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter and the Vicar of Christ, was made the first and greatest of all the Bishops.
ii. The Vicar of Christ has a universal prelacy over the whole Church of Christ.
iii. The Roman Pontiff has plentitude of power in the Church.
iv. Peter was made the Vicar of Christ and the Roman Pontiff made the Successor of Peter in the same power which Christ had given him.
v. To the same Pontiff it belongs to determine what is of faith.

Again, in *Quodlibet* ix. art. 16, (Vol. IX. p. 599) St. Thomas asserts the infallibility of the Roman See:

It is certain that the judgment of the Universal Church cannot err in those things that belong to faith; and therefore the decision of the Pope, to whom it belongs to determine by his decree what is of faith, is to be followed rather than the interpretation of Scripture by men, howsoever wise.

Earlier than this, in reply to the Precentor of Antioch, St. Thomas had dealt with the East in a treatise, called *Against Greeks, Armenians, and Saracens.* Like the *Summa contra Gentiles* it is an appeal to reason; limited here, however, to five particular points, the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, Life between death and the Resurrection, predestination, the Real Presence. Of course there is no attempt made to prove these by reason, but

only to show their reasonableness, and the unscientific and unscholarly procedure involved in rejecting them as self-contradictory:

> On these points you, Precentor of Antioch, ask for moral and philosophic reasonings such as the Saracens will accept, for it would be vain to quote authorities against those who accept not the authorities. Yet wishing to satisfy your desire, proceeding as it does from your pious wish to be able (as the Apostle teaches) to give a reason for the truth that is in you, I shall put down such simple principles as the matter allows on the various questions you have raised, which indeed I have dealt with at greater length elsewhere. (*Declaratio quorumdam articulorum contra Graecos, Armenos et Saracenos.*)

Not much, you will say, when all is complete, not much of practical value in these quotations. Yet really there is.

At the Council of Lyons in 1274, which St. Thomas never reached, ordered by the Pope to attend and to bring with him his treatise *Contra Errores Gr. corum*, but dying on his journey to it, Michael Palæologus made a profession of faith, offered him in 1267 by Clement IV. The first part of this profession is older than the thirteenth century, but the second part is taken directly from these very treatises of St. Thomas, composed in 1263.

In 1341, Benedict XII drew up a list of errors of the Armenians: these are but the work of St. Thomas, carefully edited by a canonist.

In 1439, the Council of Florence under Eugenius IV drew up a decree for the Greeks on July 26th, for the Armenians on November 22nd, for the Jacobites on February 4th, 1441. Even more absolutely here the words of St. Thomas have become the official language of the Church, the portion of the creed dealing with the

sacraments being taken verbally from the 5th Opusculum of St. Thomas, entitled *De Articulis*.

These writings of St. Thomas reappear in 1575, when Gregory XIII was endeavouring to arrange a union between Rome and the Greco-Russian Church.

For the principles of St. Thomas were never barren. They have always borne fruit. To cure heresy or heal the sores of schism, he has but one remedy and one resource, the Primacy of St. Peter. Note how absolutely in that decree for the Greeks, his words have been approved:

> We define that the Holy Apostolic See and Roman Pontiff holds a primacy in the whole earth, and that the same Roman Pontiff is the successor of Bl. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and the Vicar of Christ, and head of the whole Church, and father and teacher of all Christians; and that to him in the blessed Peter the full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the Universal Church was given by Our Lord Jesus Christ, as is also contained in the Acts of General Councils and in the Sacred Canons.

That decree was accepted by West and East, by the Patriarch of Constantinople, by the Vicars of the other Patriarchs, by the Churches of the West. It proclaimed a common basis of faith, a common centre of unity, one fold because one Shepherd.

Yet this union hardly endured in the East for more than four years: in the West it was the united belief of Christians for another hundred years. Then came the rift of heresy and schism, and the sundering of a great vision.

Under the dome of Florence still sleeps this Patriarch of Constantinople, the last to acknowledge to the full the supremacy of St. Peter. It stirs hopes and dreams to stand and look at his simple monument, and makes

one wonder whether there will ever be a final ending to that schism. Then, as we read its pathetic inscription, we realize that this could no less properly be set over the pitiful shrine that holds the bones of St. Thomas in the Church of St. Sernin in Toulouse, voicing the purpose of his life and writings, the apostolate of this Friar Preacher:

Hoc unum optarem, miro inflammatus amore,
Unus ut Europae cultus et una fides.

VIII.

DANTE, THE POET OF ST. THOMAS.

By Edward Bullough, Esq., M.A.

> Vos vero, dilecti filii, quibus auspicato contingit, ut litterarum artiumque optimarum studia, Ecclesia magistra, exerceatis, diligite carumque habete, ut facitis, hunc poetam, quem appellare christianae sapientiae laudatorem et praeconem unum omnium eloquentissimum non dubitamus. Huius enim in amore quo plus profeceritis, eo vos et perfectius ad veritatis splendorem vestros excoletis animos, et in fidei sanctae obsequio studioque constantius permanebitis.
>
> Encyclical *In praeclara* of Pope Benedict XV (April 30, 1921).

I. Introduction.

Dante, as the author of the *Divina Commedia*, is an essential part of the thirteenth century in a special sense which I venture at the outset to emphasize. No picture of the 'Times of St. Thomas,' such as this School has taken as its subject and is attempting to set before its members, could be said to be complete without mentioning his name or his work. I say advisedly 'as the author of the *Divina Commedia*'; for as the author of the *Vita Nuova*, of the *Canzoniere*, even of the *Convivio*, he might have to acknowledge rivals. But an historical retrospect of the time which has been considered as the meridian of the Middle Ages, without Dante's *Divina Commedia*, would give a far more misleading picture than would be

that of the Renaissance which made no mention of Raphael or Michelangelo: far more misleading because the Renaissance displays so much less coherence and solidarity in its civilization than the thirteenth century. Life in the fifteenth century is so much more broken up into different, sometimes very distantly connected currents. Scientific culture was breaking away from artistic culture, literature from the fine arts, the fine arts from the crafts, philosophy from politics, and all of them from religion; so that, in trying to understand what precisely was the 'civilization of the Renaissance,' we are tempted to treat each of these 'aspects' of it as one of its facets, in which we hope to catch one reflexion of the time. And this habit, acquired by our methods of learning and teaching history, which for so many people only begins with the 'modern period,' is apt to mislead us in attempting the mental reconstruction of a time which was essentially coherent in its culture, and though by no means simple, yet eminently unified.

To this consideration must be added another, as a warning against a fallacy to which we here in England are particularly prone, when we are dealing with Italy and Italian history. It must be borne in mind that Italy, alone of all the countries in Europe, has never suffered a break in the continuity of her civilization from antiquity to the present day. There is no break from ancient times to what we are apt to think of as a separate historical 'era,' called 'The Middle Ages'; no break from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and modern times. For the northern barbaric invasions, the effects of which have been much exaggerated by 'Teutonic' enthusiasts, left the essential framework of

Roman civilization intact; and the Renaissance which as a 'foreign' invasion in all other countries violently and permanently broke the national tradition in each, was precisely an *Italian* invasion, but in Italy herself an organic, indigenous growth. The historical pigeonholes labelled 'Antiquity,' 'Middle Ages,' 'Renaissance,' 'Modern Times,' have consequently little meaning for Italy with her historical perspective, going back into the past for more than 2000 years, while the *living* memory of all other countries in Europe extends at most to 600 or 800. Ozanam, who must have been one of the first outside Italy to call attention to the position of Dante in that remarkable thirteenth century, is also (I believe), one of the first to emphasize this peculiar feature of Italian cultural history. In his book *Dante et la Philosophie catholique du treizième siècle*,[1] he particularly stresses this continuity of a culture wherein pagan antiquity merged into Christian civilization and Imperial Rome became the Rome of the Popes by a natural, because indigenous, development. And it was, he says, because Dante himself consciously realized this fact, and this peculiar destiny of his country, that he became at the same time *the national Italian poet, and the 'poet of Christianity.'*

For Dante is not, as I said just now, merely one of the facets of the civilization of his time. He is not merely the literary or aesthetic illustration to the letter-press of that culture, in the sense in which we say that Racine 'illustrates' the times of Louis XIV, or Dickens 'illustrates' Victorian England. For, in the first place, the *Divina Commedia* is not only a 'poem'; it was intended

[1] A. F. Ozanam: *Dante et la philosophie du xiiie siècle*, pp. xxvii-xxviii. (Louvain, 1847; 1st ed., 1839).

for a much more practical purpose than to entertain. Its contact with Dante's own time and his contemporaries was not only, so to say, on its poetical or artistic side, but at all points of its circumference, the range of which I shall try to indicate presently. The *Divina Commedia* is situated thus in the very centre of the culture of Dante's time. It presents therefore not merely 'reflexions' of it, but contains its concentrated essence. It was—in Ozanam's own words—*la somme littéraire et philosophique du moyen-âge; et Dante le saint Thomas de la poésie.*[1]

And yet even this description fails to indicate Dante's true position. Even so, Dante in his *Divina Commedia*, however universal and embracing his genius, might be regarded as merely a segment of the civilization of his time, or as a separate and detachable element in its constitution. But, again, this he was not. For he was not only the *St. Thomas of poetry*, but also the *Poet of St. Thomas.*

This is not what you might call the 'popular' view of Dante, least of all in this country.

There are among the ordinary readers of Dante, roughly speaking, three well-defined attitudes to the *Divina Commedia*:

(*a*) The sentimental 'picturesque' attitude which delights particularly in the 'Inferno' and reads nothing else;

(*b*) The 'historical' attitude which lives in, and on, the footnotes (again chiefly to the *Inferno*) and takes a special pleasure in the—otherwise very interesting and commendable—pursuit of the historical personages and illusions mentioned.

[1] Ozanam, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

I would not be thought to be condemning either of these views of the *Divina Commedia*, but it must be evident that neither attitude is adequate to the understanding of that great work. Leaving aside all the interests which might be called strictly 'scholarly'—and for that very reason specialized and segmental—the 'picturesque' attitude is nothing but sentiment; and the second—comparable to the attitude towards architecture which is satisfied with naming the particular style and period of 'Gothic'—is often a mere matter of detached knowledge, and generally only succeeds in killing whatever interest a student may have had to begin with. In the interest precisely of those who have never tried to read Dante, I particularly wish to emphasize that such historical knowledge about everybody mentioned in the *Divina Commedia* is as little needed for the appreciation of the poem as a whole, as the date and names of periods and styles for the appreciation of architecture.

(*c*) There is a third, rather more esoteric, attitude to the *Divina Commedia*—the 'allegorical' interpretation.

That the *Divina Commedia* is an 'allegory' is, of course, undeniable, for Dante himself not only expressly says so in the letter to Can Grande of Verona to whom he dedicated the *Paradiso*, but repeatedly suggests this interpretation in the course of the *Divina Commedia*. But there are two points to be noted: first, that allegory is a very dangerous thing unless you know precisely what the allegory is intended to be; and secondly, an allegorical interpretation is very apt to destroy the literal significance of a poem by laying all the stress upon the real or alleged allegorical meaning. And—

to take this second point first—this procedure is essentially unfair to Dante and destructive of most of the poetry of the *Divina Commedia*. For if ever there was a 'realist' who meant what he said—whatever he may have meant in addition—it was Dante. I would not waste your time over this matter, if it did not ultimately involve the appreciation of exactly the *poetry* of the *Divina Commedia*, and unless this mental attitude were fairly common, especially among some of the most serious students of it. The result of it is that the *Divina Commedia* becomes a vast intricate structure of symbolic significances which in truth it is but with all the poetry left out or treated as of no account and value. And yet Dante himself has left us a warning against this very perversion when he observes: *Veramente li teologi questo senso [allegorico] prendono altrimenti che li poeti; ma perocchè mia intenzione è qui lo modo de li poeti seguitare, prendo lo senso allegorico secondo che per li poeti è usato.*[1] The poetry of the *Divina Commedia* is as is always the case in poetry indissoluble from his very words and their literal significance. Take away the words—a translation is largely sufficient for the purpose—and you have taken away the poetry. No doubt there is poetry also in the ideas signified, but unless care is taken, it is as likely to be your own poetry as to be Dante's. With all the stupendous power of imagination, of concrete and detailed vision, of the handling of the incidents, it is true, as Fr. Berthier[2] observes, 'that Dante invented less than all other poets,' as far as his use of pre-existing material is concerned. That is to say, Dante's creative poetical genius and the unparalleled hold he takes of

[1] *Conv.* II. 1.

[2] *La Divina Commedia*, etc., Introduction, p. xxxviii.

his readers, is not so much inventiveness, as the amazing skill with which he keeps the balance between 'reality' and symbolism, without ever dropping wholly into either the one or the other. It is this which constitutes his greatest artistic triumph, and it is only natural that an interpretation destroying this balance destroys at the same time the greatest part of his poetry.[1]

But it is equally essential for the appreciation of his poetry to be continously conscious of the significance which he attaches to his literal meaning. Hence the importance of being sure what this meaning is; hence also the danger of the 'allegorical' interpretation. If this allegorical interpretation is to be used within the limits of reasonable certainty, and not with the utter arbitrariness of personal fancy, an understanding is required which for want of a better name, I would call 'philosophical.'

I mean by that term the attempt to understand the relation between Dante the *man* and Dante the *poet*; an appreciation of the ideas he entertained and of what he meant to represent symbolically in his work, using the word 'ideas' to include, besides his knowledge as such, his attitude to his past and to his present, his moral judgments, his ideals, beliefs, convictions, and the consciousness of himself in his relation to his epoch and environment. This is after all the obvious method we should adopt in attempting to understand the meaning of any modern poet. Rather than read into his works whatever our ingenuity or fancy, not to say our bias and

[1] It is immaterial for my purpose whether Beatrice was or was not a historical person. It is sufficient for Dante's *poetry* that she was - if only imaginatively - a *concrete* woman, besides being an allegory or symbol.

fads, suggest, we would try to grasp the world of ideas within which he lived, we would gather whatever personal information we could, from his letters, from the reminiscences of his friends, from the history of his time, from the recorded conceptions of his contemporaries with whom he had been in contact.

It would, of course, be foolish to suggest that this method had not been applied to Dante. All the immense wealth of Dante literature, enough to fill a library by itself, the bewildering number of Dante commentaries, aim precisely at elucidating some of these aspects. And yet—? Of course, again, the task is enormously complicated by the fact that we know so little of Dante's personal history and of the more intimate vicissitudes which make up the inner story of a poet's mind. The very dispute whether or not, historically, there was a Beatrice, is typical of our uncertainty. Add to this the (generally exaggerated) belief in the 'allegorical habit' of the Middle Ages,[1] and the partisanship excited by the very subject-matter of Dante's work—and it is easy to see how the floodgates of personal idiosyncracy only waited to be opened to deluge the world with the most diverse, and often the most discordant, interpretations of Dante's meaning. It is therefore a salutary warning to read even in so recent a book as Reade's *Moral Structure of Dante's Inferno* (1909): 'As an initial maxim I would lay it down that the only possible way to understand the moral system of the *Inferno* is to go to the same school as Dante, to study the same authors in the

[1] P. Mandonnet (*Theologus Dantes*, pp. 478 ff.) points out that one of the consequences of St. Thomas' influence was the pruning of the excessive allegorizing (scriptural and otherwise) common before his time.

same spirit, and to put aside all knowledge or prejudice derived from the wisdom of a later age. Dante has supplied us with something like a complete list of the philosophies known to him, and even if he had been less liberal in his references, our knowledge of the state of learning in that period would have told us all that we require. We have, too, a mighty host of commentaries, all professing to interpret Dante historically, and all stuffed with extracts from the works of mediæval doctors. *Nevertheless, I shall venture to doubt whether there ever yet has been, in connexion with Dante, an attempt to grasp the principles of moral philosophy in the spirit of the thirteenth century, or to weigh the claims of various authorities in the scales which Dante would have used'* (p. 69).[1]

Though perhaps slightly exaggerated, this indictment of modern Dante criticism cannot fail to strike any student conversant with the methods of modern literary history as substantially true. Despite the great bulk and the extraordinary learning represented by Dante literature, there would appear a notable lack, until relatively recently, of precisely what I have tried to explain as a 'philosophical' understanding. From this point of view, it is of no use quoting for every line of the *Divina Commedia* a parallel reference from ancient philosophers, Church Fathers or mediæval Doctors, as in fact, most of the commentaries do. What is needed is an interpretation of Dante's mind *in its totality* by reference to the general intellectual and spiritual outlook of his time as a whole, and as a co-ordinated synthesis. We must know, not merely what,

[1] Cf. Reade, pp. 69-70, for an excellent illustration of what he means by this, in reference to Dante's relation to Cicero and Aristotle. The italics in the above extract are mine.

intellectually speaking, there was for Dante to see, but —and especially— from what angle and through what kind of spectacles he saw it. In short, a 'philosophical' interpretation must start, not from a textual commentary (that important and laborious part of the work has been admirably done in the past), but from a philosophical commentary of Dante's mind, in order to work from the centre to the circumference, instead of working from the circumference in the almost hopeless search for the centre.

Fortunately for us, such an 'ensemble-view' is greatly facilitated for us by Providence having placed into almost the same epoch two minds as organic, embracing and lucid, as Dante and St. Thomas. 'Il n'existe pas, me semble-t-il,' says Fr. Mandonnet,[1] 'une autre œuvre, si ce n'est la Somme Théologique de saint Thomas, qui soit si une et si multiple, c'est-à-dire si organique que la *Comédie*.' Two minds, such as these, the one preceding the other just in time to become firmly established in his office of teacher, the other, succeeding just when he would be most accessible to, and malleable by, the teaching of the former, could not well exist side by side without showing parallels such that no one could doubt the influence exercised by the one upon the other. It almost seems, in fact, as if the neglect of the teaching of St. Thomas in its bearing upon Dante during the centuries between the Renaissance and the end of the last century by laymen, who, after all, supply the large majority of Dante commentators, were the sole cause and explanation of the strange darkness which until recently overspread the fundamental and essential problems of an understanding of

[1] P. Mandonnet: *Theologus Dantes*, p. 482.

Dante's poem.[1] And even where this point of view has not been lost sight of, the quite recent change in the attitude to St. Thomas himself and his philosophy was bound to affect also our view of his relation to Dante.

This is, frankly, the aspect which interests me most in considering the subject of 'Dante, the Poet of St. Thomas.' It is to me not a question of pointing out haphazard parallels between passages of the *Divina Commedia* and statements of St. Thomas; but I conceive my subject to be in essence the problem of the only possible and rationally justifiable interpretation of the *Divina Commedia as a whole*, by reference to the formative influence exercised by the philosophy of *St. Thomas as a whole*, upon the intellectual and spiritual outlook, the 'philosophy,' if you like, of Dante.

[1] In an article by Dr. E. Krebs, *Contributo della scolastica alla relazione di alcuni problemi danteschi* (in *Scritti vari pubblicati in occasione del Sesto Centenario della Morte di Dante Alighieri*, Vita e Pensiero, 1921), Ozanam and King John of Saxony ('Philalethes') are singled out as solitary exceptions. The translation and commentary of the *Divina Commedia* by 'Philalethes' appeared in 1840, a year after Ozanam's work above referred to.

II. Dante and St. Thomas.

In what sense can Dante be called 'the Poet of St. Thomas'?

(*a*) The important point is to realize, before suggesting an answer to this question, in what sense Dante is *not* the Poet of St. Thomas. Nothing could be more mistaken than the idea that the *Divina Commedia* is a sort of versified presentation of St. Thomas' philosophical system. Dante did not derive his inspiration from St. Thomas. That inspiration he derived, like all poets in the true sense of the term, from his personal experience, not from abstract ideas. The point of contact between Dante and St. Thomas lies not in the *Divina Commedia*, but far deeper, below the level of Dante's directly poetical activity.

(*b*) That Dante attained to a degree of learning—how, has been much disputed—which placed him into the forefront of learned men of his time, is generally admitted. His own contemporaries marvelled at, and commented upon, the universality no less than the detailed accuracy of his knowledge, and Villani, who knew him during the latter part of his life, observes that he *fù grande letterato quasi in ogni scienza, tutto fosse laïco*; and indeed he adds: *Questo Dante per lo suo savere fù alquanto presuntuoso e schifo e isdegnoso, e quasi a guisa di filosofo mal grazioso, non bene sapeva conversare co' laïci*—a form of intolerance and pride of which Dante more than once seems to accuse himself in the *Divina Commedia*. An unknown hand of a contemporary wrote in the MS. of the *Divina Commedia* in the Magliabecchiana: *Iste Dantes fuit homo in quo natura conata*

fuit ostendere potentiam suam . . . Fuit doctus in Grammatica, Logica, Philosophia morali et naturali, Arithmetica, Geometria, Musica, Astrologia, Rhetorica, et maximus theologus, poeta et historiographus, et non fuit expers ullius dogmatis.[1] That this was not a legend we gather from Dante's *Convivio* which recounts, as it were, his educational history. Even at that time, when learning aimed at universality rather than specialization, and when the enumeration of all these sciences might even mean little more than the ordinary *trivium* and *quadrivium*, Dante's mind, in which indeed 'Nature had endeavoured to display all her power,' carried him far beyond the normal compass of learning. The realization of Dante's range and accuracy of knowledge is one of the first impressions made upon the student of his works, and one of the greatest delights of the study of the *Divina Commedia* is to observe the playful ease with which he employs his learning. There seems indeed nothing known at his time whether in Physics and Astronomy, Mathematics and Geography, Philosophy or Theology, crafts of every kind, from that of the butcher or tailor to that of the shipwright, fisherman or peasant, that has escaped, not only his notice, but his careful observation. Most startling of all is his acquaintance with the political and social history, not merely of Italy, but of France, Germany, Spain, England, Sicily; and with history, not only contemporary, but with that sort of history which we all know from our own experience is so difficult to obtain, *viz.*, the history immediately preceding his own time. It is from the indication of this sort of knowledge, coupled with the sometimes very detailed and concrete reference to local

[1] Quoted by Fr. Berthier, *op. cit.*, p. xxiii.

topography, that the legends of a sojourn in Paris, and even Oxford, seem to have sprung. Indeed, Boccaccio tells the story that Dante attended the University of Paris; but more convincing than Boccaccio is the passage in the *Paradiso*[1] where he mentions the very name of the street where Siger of Brabant, St. Thomas' opponent, taught. Yet it is, I believe, now generally accepted that he did not visit Paris. To these branches of more or less set learning we must add his personal, and, if you like, 'professional' interest in Poetry, both vernacular—for he was one, if not the chief, representative of the new 'school' of the *dolce stil nuovo*—and Provençal; a familiarity, both poetical and technical, which he again uses, quite incidentally, in the *Divina Commedia* when he encounters representatives of various 'schools,' both contemporary and earlier. Parallel to this, we must note his interest in the history and development of his own native tongue, which led him to compose his treatise *De vulgari eloquentia*, the first real study, linguistic and philological, of the Italian language, its numerous and very living dialects, and their descent from the Latin stock. This aspect, again, of his intellectual curiosity brings to our notice his close study of the past of his own country. His acquaintance with Latin—whatever he himself tells us of his Latin studies—is, on the authority of Fr. Mandonnet, superior to that of most writers of his time, and his knowledge of Latin literature, as far as then known, was both wide and minute, especially, of course, his familiarity with the works of Virgil, his guide through the Inferno and the greater part of the Purgatorio. There can be little doubt that his devotion to Virgil was in part due to his

[1] *Parad.* X. 136–138.

considering Virgil as the greatest pagan herald of Christianity (Statius in the *Purgatorio* no doubts reflects Dante's view[1]); in part, it was admiration for him as a writer (*Inf.* I. 85-7), but not least as the poet and seer of Rome's history and greatness. His knowledge of Roman history, ancient history and legend, and of mythology generally, and of the main facts known to the ancient writers of the happenings of their world—all form an historical perspective in Dante's mind, going back into the distant past, and compose, crowded with incidents and figures, the historical background of a world-development spiritual and secular, *al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra*, as he says of the *Divina Commedia* itself. And all this information is used with masterly lightness and facility, by way of comparison or illustrations: as the march of Alexander the Great in India to describe the flakes of fire, or the work in the Venetian shipyard to describe the valley of the boiling pitch, or where he likens the raised bank of Flegetonte, when he and Virgil cross the desert of burning sand, to the dyke 'which the Flemish have constructed between Wissant and Bruges against the inroads of the sea' (*Inf.* XV. 4).

The *Divina Commedia* itself is sufficient proof of the organic synthesis which Dante succeeded in creating between all this multifarious, often disconnected learning. Indeed, humanly speaking, it is inconceivable

[1] *Facesti come quei che va di notte*
Che porta il lume retro e sè non giova,
Ma dopo sè fa le persone dotte,
Quando dicesti: "Secol si rinnova;
Torna giustizia e primo tempo umano,
E progenie scende dal ciel nuova . . ."
(*Purg.* XXII. 67-72.)

This last quotation is taken from the famous 'messianic' Eclogue IV. of Virgil.

how any one could, as it were, hold in solution such diverse and widely scattered knowledge, without feeling the necessity, not merely the need, of having some thread to unify it all. This process of discovering the thread, fills a whole period of Dante s intellectual and spiritual history. Without our being able to say definitely and with any certainty what precisely were the historical vicissitudes through which he passed, this span of his life is, all the same, clearly marked in his unmistakably autobiographical works, the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convivio*. Dante there symbolizes three stages of his spiritual Aeneid by three female figures: his first love, Beatrice; the lady who came to him after Beatrice's death, Primavera; and the Lady of the poems which form the subject-matter of the *Convivio*. It is evidently this last Lady, who, as he himself explains, is Philosophy, that represents the star under whose constellation he passed through the slow and often painful synthesis of his intellectual interests.

The relation between the *Vita Nuova*, the *Convivio* and the *Divina Commedia*, and the question to what reality the manifest symbolism of these works refers, is of course one of the most debated and least soluble problems of Dante criticism. Without entering into this discussion, it suffices to state what no one disputes, *viz.*, that the *Convivio* marks a transition stage between the *Vita Nuova* and the *Divina Commedia*, and is largely preparatory to the latter. It is evident from indications in the *Divina Commedia* that there was some tragedy, or at least some serious disorder, in Dante's inward life, presumably in the period intervening between the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convivio*. At any rate the *Convivio* bears unmistakable traces of the strain and effort to

reach some co-ordination, some unity, some intellectual point of vantage from which to survey and order his experiences, his knowledge and observations. He believes at that time to have found it in Philosophy, which, as he describes her on the pattern of Boethius, *veramente è donna piena di dolcezza, ornata d'onestade, mirabile di savere, gloriosa di libertade* (*Conv.* II, 16). What Philosophy? There can be little doubt but that it was that of St. Thomas.

(*c*) How, and why?

The evidences for the inspiration which Dante drew from St. Thomas are numerous in the *Convivio*, and of several different kinds. In the first place there are several actual references to St. Thomas, notably the one at the end where Dante calls him *il buono frate Tommaso d' Aquino* and mentions his *Contra Gentiles* as the pattern on which he framed the expression *Contra-li-erranti* which occurs in the last of the poems commented on in the *Convivio*. There is an actual quotation (with the source acknowledged) from the *Contra Gentiles* (Lib. I, Cap. V.), and the very striking reproduction (without acknowledgment) from the *De Spiritualibus Creaturis* (I. 3, ad Resp.), likening the substantial unity of the soul, comprising the rational, sensitive and vegetative soul, to the pentagon, comprising the tetragon and triangle within itself (*Conv.* IV. 7, end.). There are numberless other more or less close parallels to Thomistic teaching. But in a way much more striking is the extraordinary importance which Dante assigns to Aristotle throughout the *Convivio*. He remarks that *tiene questa gente* (*i.e.*, the Peripatetics) *oggi lo reggimento del mondo in dottrina per tutte parti, e puotesi appellare quasi cattolica opinione* (*Conv.* IV. 6). If it is remembered

that as late as 1210 a provincial Council at Paris had prohibited the works of Aristotle, that in 1231 Gregory IX forbade the reading of Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics* (from which Dante constantly quotes) until they should be expurgated, that not until 1336 the Commission for the Reform of the University of Paris made the teaching of certain of the works of Aristotle obligatory[1]—if, in short, we keep in mind the bitter hostility against Aristotelian philosophy on the part of the great majority of the teachers of the Church, and the hard and almost single-handed struggle waged by St. Thomas for its recognition, a struggle in which St. Thomas himself risked condemnation and remained the object of attacks until the very end of his life—then the enthusiastic and whole-hearted admiration of Dante for Aristotle becomes one of the most telling indications of the influence of Thomistic thought upon the formation of his own ideas.

And as it were to clinch the argument, Dante himself tells us in the *Convivio* how he came to learn philosophy: *Cominciai ad andare là dov' ella* (la filosofia) *si dimostrava veracemente, cioè ne le scuole de li religiosi,*[2] *i.e.*, the school of the Dominican Friars at Santa Maria Novella in Florence. We are indebted chiefly to the researches of the late lamented Monsignor Salvadori, and of the Fathers Berthier, Mandonnet and Taurisano for information on this centre of philosophical teaching. There existed in Florence a *studium solemne* of the Order in the second half of the thirteenth century, until a *studium generale* was established there in 1295, after the

[1] Cf. O. Mazzella: *S. Tommaso e Aristotele* (in *Actis Hebdomadae Thomisticae*, Roma, 1924), pp. 32–4.

[2] *Conv. II*, 12.

separation of the Roman Province. The death of Beatrice—or whatever it symbolizes—occurred in 1290, and presumably soon after Dante devoted himself to philosophical studies. According to the latest information discovered by Fr. Taurisano,[1] there can be little doubt that Dante's chief teacher was a certain Frate Remigio, a Florentine himself, and a direct pupil of St. Thomas. The son of a rich Florentine merchant, Remigio had been sent to Paris, probably to study law; there he fell under the spell both of St. Thomas, during his second period of teaching in Paris, 1269-1272, and of the Dominican ideal, and was received into the Order. On his return to Florence he was appointed *lector* at Sta. Maria Novella and continued as a teacher there for no less than 42 years. He appears to have been one of the most ardent supporters of St. Thomas and of his teachings, and died, after having been Prior of Sta. Maria Novella and Provincial of the Roman Province, in 1319, two years before Dante. It seems beyond doubt that he was a personal friend of Dante's even during his lay career, and thus forms a curiously direct link, both personally and intellectually, between Dante and St. Thomas. In addition there was another light of the Order at Florence in the person of Fra Nicola Brunacci, who also became *lector* in Florence, though there is some dispute as regards the actual date. Fra Nicola had actually accompanied St. Thomas to Paris, had studied with him at Cologne under Albertus Magnus, and was described by the latter, in recommending him to the Roman Province as a 'second brother Thomas of Aquino.' If Fr. Taurisano's dates are correct, *viz.*,

[1] P. Innoc. Taurisano, O.P., *Discepoli e Biografi di S. Tommaso*, Roma, 1924.

that he became *lector* in 1299 (according to Mandonnet in 1295[1]), Dante can hardly have come directly under his influence, for by 1296 Dante was already taking an active part in the political life of Florence, until his sentence of exile in January, 1302.

(*d*) The significance of Thomistic thought for Dante will be obvious, if we remember what was, so to speak, the special problem confronting him, *viz.*, the crystallization and synthesis of conceptions and interests covering in their range the philosophy of the ancients; national, chiefly Roman, history; the philosophical conceptions current at his time, including what we should call scientific interests, politics and the theory of government; and the further synthesis of all these with theological ideas.

Even a cursory glance through the *Convivio* shows the extent of the ground covered by the notion of 'philosophy' in Dante's mind. It was mainly, as just said, Aristotelianism; but it included also the recent Arabic thought; Platonic ideas, either in themselves or in the guise of Augustinianism; the Stoics; Cicero, and especially Boethius. The special function which Thomism fulfilled in Dante's mind was precisely that it presented practically all these elements in a coherently elaborated and definitely formulated system. It is an important truth which Reade[2] recalls in a somewhat different context, when he observes: 'No one will formally question the importance of studying St. Thomas, but *the fact which has usually failed to secure practical recognition is that St. Thomas is the author of a system.*' It is

[1] See Taurisano, *loc. cit.*, p. 28; Mandonnet, *Theologus Dantes*, pp. 457 ff.

[2] Reade, *The Moral Structure of the Inferno*, p. 79 (italics mine).

precisely this systematic character of the teaching of St. Thomas, which must have made it into the most powerful influence and stimulus for Dante's equally logical mind, craving for the organic unification of its content.

No less important was the fact that St. Thomas had effected just that combination of Aristotelianism with Christian thought which brought ancient philosophy so surprisingly, and so effectively within the orbit of the latter; and lastly that Thomism solved also the problem of the embarrassing, yet so attractive force of Arabic speculation. Thus the synthesis of St. Thomas: Aristotle *plus* Patristic *plus* Platonic thought *plus* Arabic philosophy *plus* Christian theology became the unifying thread round which Dante was able to crystallize his own conceptions.

The effects of this process are plainly visible in the *Convivio*. The *Convivio* would seem to be the record of Dante's effort in this direction. But it seems also that it is not the end of the process. The *Convivio* represents the unification not yet complete, but still in the making. Quite apart from the form of its presentation and its incomplete state, there is something still incoherent and unfinished about the *Convivio* when compared with the *Divina Commedia*. The final synthesis is not yet reached. There seems to me lacking that ultimate motive force which is so marked in the *Divina Commedia*, constituted not so much by religious thought as by religious experience. The *Convivio* contains certainly references to God, to the action of the Divine Intellect, to the centering of the Universe in God. It contains many and beautiful digressions on definitely religious topics. Yet they

sound rather like things thought and spoken about than like things felt and experienced; things held by Reason rather than by Faith, constituting philosophical rather then practical ends. Although innumerable ideas occur identically both in the *Convivio* and the *Divina Commedia*, so that one can serve often as a commentary to the other, yet the perspective of the *Convivio* is somehow not the same as that of the *Divina Commedia*. The distances are not yet properly adjusted, things obtrude themselves in the foreground that are out of place there; vistas should be opened that are still obscured by the tangled growth of secondary things. This is what I mean by saying that the *Convivio* seems to me to show the unification of Dante's ideas still in the making, though proceeding quite unmistakably on the Thomistic pattern,.

(*e*) If this might be called the unification of Dante's ideas *materialiter*, no less important is that process *formaliter*. I mean by this that the order of Thomistic conceptions, their arrangement and perspective—let me call it the 'articulation' of Thomistic philosophy—has become eventually – in the period marked by the *Divina Commedia*, but not yet in that of the *Convivio*—the articulation of Dante's mind.

The ultimate and essential unity of Thomistic thought, the point of reference towards which all its conceptions are ordered and from which all the direct principles of its philosophy are deduced, is the conception of *Being*, and of its supreme exemplar, the pure Being of God. *Thence* is derived all other participated and created being. *It* is the point whereon the Universe hangs. So we find Dante's *Divina Commedia* ordered in precisely the same manner. At every point and all along Dante's

path on his journey through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, the pure Being of God, whether denied and cursed in Hell, hoped and longed for in Purgatory, seen and experienced in Paradise, is the pole-star of Dante's wanderings. And when in the last Heaven he catches for the first time a glimpse of the Godhead, as a minute pin-point of light in the immense distance, so small that even the smallest star would appear by comparison like a moon, but of so intense a brightness that his vision is unable to bear the sight, Beatrice says also *da quel punto Dipende il cielo e tutta la natura* (Par. XXVIII. 41-2).

But further: one of the great problems of the time was that of the respective functions of Faith and Reason and of their mutual relations. On this question, the solution of which influenced so deeply the whole subsequent development of human thought, St. Thomas held views in many respects peculiar to himself. It was the solution of this problem, especially the delimitation of the respective spheres of Faith and Reason, and the determination of the place and function pertaining to each, which constitutes the claim of St. Thomas to be considered, as has recently been shown,[1] as the first of the modern philosophers, and has made Thomism into a turning-point in the history of human thought. St. Thomas' formula, *impossibile est quod de eodem sit fides et scientia*, has already been explained by other lecturers. It furnishes the first great division in the articulation of his system: *viz.*, the distinction of what can be held by Reason and what must be held by Faith. Among the former are such matters as the existence of God, and the knowledge of the Divine

[1] E. Gilson, *Études de Philosophie Médiévale*, Strasbourg, 1921.

attributes, argued from the effects of God's creation: among the latter are all the truths given us by Revelation, inaccessible to Reason as such, and held on Divine authority. Thus there is (a) a natural knowledge of God by Reason, and (b) a supernatural knowledge of God by Faith: both (a) and (b) leading up to (c) man's last end, Beatitude, the Vision of God.

Any one having even a superficial acquaintance with the *Divina Commedia* will at once detect in this 'articulation' of the Thomistic scheme the main lines of the division of the *Divina Commedia*. In the *Divina Commedia*, the human reason at its best is represented by Virgil, Dante's guide through the whole *Inferno* and the greater part of the *Purgatorio*, up to the Terrestrial Paradise, where he at last meets Beatrice. There Beatrice, the symbol of Divine Revelation or Supernatural knowledge, makes her entrance on the Chariot of the Church in the midst of the 'Mystical Procession.' Dante, in the perturbation of his mind into which this meeting with Beartice, his first love, throws him, turns to Virgil for help and comfort—but Virgil has vanished:

> Ma Virgilio n' avea lasciati scemi
> Di sè, Virgilio, dolcissimo padre,
> Virgilio, a cui per mia salute die'mi.[1]
> (*Purg.* XXX. 49-51.)

Why? *Impossibile est quod de eodem sit fides et scientia.*

[1] But Virgil had bereaved us of himself;
Virgil, my best-loved father; Virgil, he
To whom I gave me up for safety. . . .

N.B.—The translations are taken from Cary's translation of the *Divina Commedia*. The occasional inadequacy of their renderings will be evident to any one familiar with the original text.

And again, when in his ascent into Paradise, under the guidance of Beatrice, Dante has at last penetrated into the Empyrean and finds himself in the midst (*nel giallo*) of the *Rosa mistica*, he turns to Beatrice 'to ask my lady about the things which kept my mind in suspense':

> Uno intendea, ed altro mi rispose;
> Credea veder Beatrice, e vidi un sene,
> Vestito con le genti gloriose.[1]
> (*Par.* XXXI. 58–60):

viz., St. Bernard, who as the symbol of Contemplation leads him to the very vision of God, while Beatrice, whose office has been fulfilled, takes her seat at the feet of the Blessed Virgin.

The substitution of Beatrice for Virgil, and of St. Bernard for Beatrice, is so marked in its abruptness and instantaneousness that the idea of an intentional allegorical meaning is irresistible and has, in fact, never been questioned. But if it is desired to obtain direct evidence from the *Divina Commedia* of the meaning implied, this is furnished by Virgil in a remark he makes in Canto III. of the *Purgatorio*. The passage is all the more interesting as it has evidently puzzled Cary when he translated it. Virgil is here discoursing on the incomprehensible Divine wisdom, and says:

> Matto è chi spera che nostra ragione
> Possa trascorrer la infinita via,
> Che tiene una sustanzia in tre persone.
> *State contenti, umana gente, al quia:*
> Chè, se possuto aveste veder tutto,
> Mestier non era partorir Maria. . . .
> (*Purg.* III. 34–39.)

[1] But answer found from other than I ween'd;
For, Beatrice when I thought to see,
I saw instead a senior at my side,
Robed, as the rest, in glory.

Cary entirely misunderstands this passage when he translates:

> Insane,
> Who hopes our reason may that space explore,
> Which holds three Persons in one Substance knit.
> *Seek not the wherefore, race of human kind;*
> Could ye have seen the whole, no need had been
> For Mary to bring forth . . .

The mistranslation of the fourth line is obvious, and the real meaning of the passage is contained in the following two sentences from the first book of the *Contra Gentiles* (c. III.): *Sensibilia autem ad hoc ducere intellectum nostrum non possunt ut in eis divina substantia videatur* quid sit: *cum sint effectus causae virtutem non aequantes. Ducitur tamen ex sensibilibus intellectus noster in divinam cognitionem ut cognoscat de Deo,* quia est, *et alia hujusmodi quae oportet attribui primo principio.*

Thus the Thomistic articulation: Natural knowledge (*Philosophy*)—Supernatural knowledge (*Theology*)—Beatific Vision (religious experience and *Contemplation*)—or in Dante's symbolism *Virgil—Beatrice—St. Bernard,* forms the main support of the inward framework of the *Divina Commedia.* We may add that it does so also in Dante's mind, and moreover in what we may suppose was his spiritual and intellectual history.

Beatrice had been Dante's first love—whether historical or imaginary, certainly symbolically; soon after her death he deserted her and her memory, and gave himself to others; and when he meets her in the Terrestrial Paradise, she severely and ruthlessly upbraids him, so that even the accompanying angels take pity upon him and attempt to intercede for him with her. But

she insists unflinchingly on full confession and repentance, and in justification of her insistence, she says to the angels:

Questi fu tal ne la sua vita nuova
Virtualmente, ch' ogni abito destro
Fatto averebbe in lui mirabil prova.
Ma tanto più maligno e più silvestro
Si fa'l terren col mal seme e non colto,
Quant' egli ha più del buon vigor terrestro.
Alcun tempo il sostenni col mio volto;
Mostrando li occhi giovanetti a lui,
Meco il menava in dritta parte volto.
Sì tosto come in su la soglia fui
Di mia seconda etade, e mutai vita,
Questi si tolse a me, e diessi altrui.
Quando di carne a spirto era salita,
E bellezza e virtù cresciuta m'era,
Fu'io a lui men cara e men gradita;
E volse i passi suoi per via non vera,
Imagini di ben seguendo false,
Che nulla promission rendono intera.
Nè l'impetrare spirazion mi valse,
Con le quali ed in sogno e altrimenti
Lo rivocai; sì poco a lui ne calse.[1] . . .
(*Purg.* XXX. 115–135.)

[1] This man . . . was . . .
So gifted virtually, that in him
All better habits wonderously had thrived.
The more of kindly strength is in the soil,
So much doth evil seed and lack of culture
Mar it the more, and make it run to wildness.
These looks sometime upheld him; for I show'd
My youthful eyes, and led him by their light
In upright walking. Soon as I had reach'd
The threshold of my second age, and changed
My mortal for immortal; then he left me,
And gave himself to others. When from flesh
To spirit I had risen, and increase
Of beauty and of virtue circled me,
I was less dear to him, and valued less.
His steps were turn'd into deceitful ways,

Both this and the later passage (*Par.* XXXI. 52 ff.) quite evidently represent an actual record of Dante's spiritual and intellectual history. Together with the passage when he meets Forese Donati (*Purg.* XXIII. 115), they make it almost impossible not to see therein the story of some lapse, of some inner upheaval which has left a bitter memory. After his confession and purification Dante asks Beatrice (*Purg.* XXXIII. 82 ff.) why it is that:

> . . . tanto sopra mia veduta
> Vostra parola disiata vola,
> Che più la perde quanto più s'aiuta?

And Beatrice replies:

> Perchè conoschi, . . . quella scuola
> C' hai seguitata, e veggi sua dottrina
> Come può seguitar la mia parola . . .[1]

(*i.e.*, 'how *little* it is able to follow . . .'). This again, seems to indicate some philosophical, intellectual as well as moral, aberration into which Dante had fallen, during that period of his life lying between the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convivio*, when he had not yet discovered the orientation which eventually under Thomistic guidance was to lead him back to Beatrice in the *Divina Commedia*. One is tempted to imagine some lapse from

> Following false images of good, that make
> No promise perfect. Nor avail'd me aught
> To sue for inspirations, with the which,
> I, both in dreams of night, and otherwise,
> Did call him back . . .

[1] But wherefore soars thy wish'd-for speech so high
Beyond my sight, that loses it the more,
The more it strains to reach it?—
To the end
That thou mayst know . . . the school,
That thou hast follow'd; and how far behind,
When following my discourse, its learning halts. . . .

Faith, or perhaps, as Fr. Mandonnet so ingeniously suggests in his interpretation of Dante's autobiographical works, the loss and abandonment of a religious vocation, for which Dante was determined to make atonement, and, indeed, did make the most wonderful reparation, when he resolved, as he says at the end of the *Vita Nuova*, 'to say no more of that Blessed One until I should be able to treat of her worthily. And to do so, I study as much as ever I can, as in sooth she knows. So that if it be the pleasure of Him through Whom all things live, that my life be spared for some years, I hope to speak of her things which have never been spoken of any one'—precisely in the *Divina Commedia*.

It is tempting to pursue this suggestion and to wonder whether the *Divina Commedia* itself be not, like the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convivio*, something more than just a poem, a fiction sublime and wonderful, but after all a fiction, 'carrying conviction . . . simply through the triumph of the poet's art.'

But, continues Dr. E. Gardner,[1] elsewhere we find Dante claiming more than this for the *Divina Commedia*; we find him unmistakably laying claim to some sort of direct personal mystical experience, to rank among those to whom some special revelation of the divine has been vouchsafed; as one who, while still bound round with the fetters of time, has touched more than the outskirts of eternity. I refer, of course, to the famous passage at the close of the Letter to Can Grande, where, after citing examples from the Scriptures, and appealing to the authority of certain great mystics to justify the possibility of so sublime a vision, Dante suddenly breaks out into that passionate plea lest his own unworthiness should prevent his message being accepted of men—a passage in which the personal note rings out as

[1] E. Gardner: *Dante and the Mystics*, 1913, pp. 31–32.

clearly as in the like words addressed to Virgil at the outset of his spiritual pilgrimage (*Inf.* II. 33), or in the more explicit confession to Beatrice on the banks of Lethe. It may, perhaps, be granted more easily to a man to lay claim to an exalted vision when he is writing poetry; to do so in bald prose is another matter; and it is, I think, some sense of this that makes the poet speak of himself in the third person, as though he were interpreting the work of another. He is evidently imitating the Apostle's impersonal way of referring to his own mystical experiences in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, ascribing them to the man he knew, who was *caught up to the third heaven*, who *was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

Compare with this the solemn opening of the *Paradiso:*

> Nel ciel che più de la sua luce prende
> Fu' io, e vidi cose che ridire
> Nè sa nè può chi di lassù discende;
> Perchè, appressando sè al suo disire,
> Nostro intelletto sí profonda tanto,
> Che dietro la memoria non può ire.[1]

Whether there was or was not, behind the 'sublime fiction' a real spiritual experience, there is no question that the *Divina Commedia* was for Dante himself not just a poem. It was a message which he burnt to deliver; its writing was a MISSION, a task laid upon him solemnly by Beatrice herself (*Purg.* XXXII. 103-5), and impressed upon him again by Cacciaguida, his crusading forbear whom he encounters in the Heaven of Mars

[1] . . . In heaven,
That largeliest of His light partakes, was I,
Witness of things, which, to relate again,
Surpasseth power of him who comes from thence;
For that, so near approaching its desire,
Our intellect is to such depth absorb'd,
That memory cannot follow. . . .

(*Parad.* XVII. 124 ff.). It is in obedience to these instructions that, in dedicating the *Paradiso* to Can Grande, he states the object of this part and of the whole to be *removere viventes in hac vita de statu miseriae et perducere ad statum felicitatis* (*Op.* p. 440). Again, we find ourselves balancing upon the knife-edge of reality and symbolism, upheld by the stupendous power and infinite tact of the poet.

III. Conclusion.

Lack of space makes it impossible to show in detail how and in what manner the Thomistic philosophy finds expression in particular ideas, or doctrines, or in the underlying conceptions of various parts of the *Divina Commedia*. What has been called 'the Moral Structure of the *Inferno*'—one of the most disputed problems—and the structure of the *Purgatorio*, as has quite recently been shown,[1] display the working of Thomistic ideas, applied to the fundamental framework of the *Commedia*. The two canti of the *Paradiso* (XXVIII and XXIX), dealing with the Angelic Choirs, are peculiarly interesting examples of Dante's detailed following of the Angelic Doctor. The doctrine of free will,[2] on which Dante lays so much stress throughout the *Divina Commedia*; its relation to the problem of the Divine Providence;[3] his teaching of the substantial unity of the soul[4] as against the doctrines of the Arabs, so energetically combated by St. Thomas; the disagreement with Plato's theory of the souls returning to their appointed stars;[5] the theory of knowledge suggested in Canto XVIII of the *Purgatorio*; his conception of Divine justice and his ethical theory;[6] his exposition concerning the generation of the

[1] Cf. A. Santi: *L'Ordinamento morale e l'Allegoria nella Divina Commedia*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 113, chap. 1 ff. Cf. also the Pastoral Letter of Cardinal Pietro Maffei, *Il Credo di Dante*, Torino, 1922.

[2] Especially *Purg.* XVI.

[3] *Parad.* XIX, XXI.

[4] *Purg.* IV, 1-12; XXV. 52 ff.

[5] *Parad.* IV. 22 ff.

[6] *Purg.* XVIII. 40 ff.; *Parad.* IV. 64 ff.; XIX.

human body and its relation to the soul;[1] his wonderful account of the redemption[2]—which bears such a striking likeness to a passage in the letters of Santa Caterina da Siena; the description of the damned in the *Inferno* as *coloro C'hanno perduto il ben dello intelletto*;[3] the whole *cosmogonia dantesca*, which has recently been shown to be essentially Thomistic, against the suggestion of neo-platonic and Arabic influences[4]—these and many others could be developed as instances of the faithfulness with which Dante follows St. Thomas' ideas, setting forth his teaching, attacking his opponents, criticizing his critics.

What above all would be worthy of our study, is the figure of St. Thomas himself, whom Dante encounters in the *Paradiso* in the Heaven of the Sun, as the leader of a garland of lights, the chief of the *spiriti sapienti*, together with Albertus Magnus– *Questi, che m' è a destra più vicino. Frate e maestro fummi, ed esso Alberto È di Colonia* (*Par.* X. 97-9). This first garland of lights is presently joined by another, led by St. Bonaventura, and the meeting is developed in those splendid *canti* where, with that courtesy which was so characteristic of St. Dominic and St. Francis, St. Thomas sings the magnificent eulogy of St. Francis, and St. Bonaventura, to respond to *la infiammata cortesia Di fra Tommaso*, sings the praises of St. Dominic; and in the next canto, where St. Thomas himself instructs Dante on the wisdom of Adam, Solomon and Christ, in answer to an unuttered question in the poet's mind.

[1] *Purg.* XXV. 31 ff. [2] *Parad.* VII. 52 ff.
[3] *Inf.* III. 18.
[4] Cf. G. Busnelli, S.J., *La Cosmogonia dantesca e le sue fonti*, in *Scritti vari* (Vita e Pensiero), 1921, pp. 42 ff.

And who but a confirmed Thomist could have defined the Beatific vision itself as Dante does (*Par.* XXVIII. 109-111)?

> Quinci si può veder come si fonda
> L'esser beato nell'atto che vede,
> Non in quel ch'ama, che poscia seconda[1] . . .

Still, with all this, I should be sorry, if I should have conveyed the impression that Dante had, as it were, his eyes fixed always upon the writings of St. Thomas while composing his *Divina Commedia*, lest he should be betrayed into misconception or error. I have tried to prevent such a mistaken view by pointing out earlier that the *Divina Commedia* is not a 'versified' St. Thomas, that the Thomistic influence lies much deeper, at the root of Dante's whole intellectual life, and that Dante was not just an intellectualist, a philosopher who also wrote poetry, or a theologian with a literary vein. Any such attempt as I have here made, however much developed and elaborated, cannot possibly exhaust the *Divina Commedia*, for two reasons: it cannot even touch the poetry with its glow, its colour, its human pathos and its irresistible humour; and it leaves out of account the man himself, to whom the visions of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven were realities, none the less real because supernatural. What M. Gilson says in his introduction to his new work, *La Philosophie de saint Bonaventure*—whose burning charity and mysticism were certainly not without influence upon Dante[2]: 'Notre moyen âge tout entier n'est pas moins défiguré ni mutilé par notre

[1] . . . Thus happiness hath root
In seeing, not in loving, which of sight
Is aftergrowth . . .

[2] E. Gilson, *La Conclusion de la Divine Comédie et la mystique franciscaine* (*Rev. d'Histoire franciscaine*, I. i, 1924).

faute que ne serait une Divine Comédie sans la mystique de l'amour qui la couronne. Attentifs surtout au grand mouvement intellectuel qui prépare la merveilleuse réussite du thomisme . . . nous oublions peut-être trop qu'il se couronne lui-meme par une mystique et qu'autour de toutes ces intelligences que séduisait le génie des speculatifs, d'innombrables amours veillaient'—this, as he says, is equally true of Dante and of his *Divina Commedia*.

And so Dante must be studied, appreciated and loved, not for what we fancy in our own minds that he may have meant, but for what we can ascertain that he did mean. Whether *we* who read him are Catholics or not—it is certain that he cannot be understood or appreciated except as the Catholic that *he* was. This interpretation has not infrequently been attacked from partisan motives—quite unjustifiably, for the postulate that you must understand your author's standpoint is nothing more than common sense. Nor would it be worth while mentioning it, if—precisely again for partisan purposes—the orthodoxy itself of Dante had not occasionally been called in doubt. The attempts to make capital out of Dante's invectives against a few of the contemporary popes who happened to be his political opponents—to be precise, *four* of the popes out of the thirteen who reigned during Dante's lifetime[1]—or out of his criticism of the monastic orders of his time for laxity or lavishness, or out of his attacks on the political attitude or the pomp and corruption of the Roman Curia, or out of his questionings of the ultimate wisdom of the Donation of Constantine, and similar topics in the

[1] Cf. the late Bishop Casartelli, *Dante and the Popes* (Manchester University Press, 1922).

Divina Commedia—such attempts spring either from pure partisanship or are the result of that peculiar intellectual crudity which so constantly wholly misconceives Catholic ideas. Nor have they even the merit of novelty. No sooner did the Protestant Reformation begin, as Ozanam expresses it, to 'feel the need of constructing for itself a reputable ancestry,' than the attempt was made to insinuate doubts into the mind of the Italians about Dante's orthodoxy, and to present him as a forerunner of Luther, even as a prophet of him. This effort was met at the time by no less person that Cardinal Bellarmine. In chapters XIV to XIX of his *Responsio ad Librum quemdam anonymum, cuius titulus est 'Aviso piacevole dato alla bella Italia'* in Vol. II of his *Opuscula* (Cologne, 1617), he rebuts the—sometimes very strange—accusations brought against Dante's *Divina Commedia*. There have been no suggestions down to our time—as far as I know—which do not find their answer in that spirited and well-informed reply. The Catholic Church has never felt any doubt about the orthodoxy of the *Divina Commedia*, because she was quite as capable as Dante himself of distinguishing between politics and matters of faith, between persons and offices, between opinion and dogma. And I venture to direct your attention in conclusion to the subtle tribute paid by the Holy Father himself to this great genius of the Catholic Church, when he issued the medal in the second year of his Pontificate in commemoration of the sexcentenary of the canonization of St. Thomas. The medal shows St. Thomas in the centre: on his left is Pope John XXII, who canonized him in 1323—two years after Dante's death—and Pope Leo XIII, who proclaimed him the

Patron of all the Catholic Schools. But on his right, standing upon a cloud, are Dante and Beatrice. And the circumscription runs:

ALIGHERIO PRAECINENTE IOANNES XXII
ANNO DOM. MCCCXXIII SANCTORUM ORDINI
ADSCRIPSIT.

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IX.

THE LITURGICAL POETRY OF ST. THOMAS.

By His Lordship the Bishop of Clifton.

The language employed by St. Thomas in all his writings belongs to that later development of Latin that has been called, not improperly, Christian Latin, whose beginnings take us back to the years following the Great Plague of A.D. 166. That plague, spreading from Persia to the Rhine and Gaul, swept away one half of the population of the Empire, and left but few survivors of that wealthy and cultured class which had inherited the masterpieces of the splendid but artificial and short-lived classical Latin. This had never been the language of the people, who spoke their unpolished *lingua plebeia* or *rustica*. The old masterpieces were already antiquated, though still taught in schools. A strong, new wave of Hellenism had set in, and for general purposes, excepting law, Greek was preferred to Latin. Greek, not Latin, was the language of the early Roman church. Moreover, the frequent drafting of barbarians into the army, and later on their admission to both military and civil charges, together with the flooding of Rome with Orientals, could not but tend to debase the purity of the old idiom, and the division of the Empire witnessed the complete decay of almost all literature and art. There followed more than a century of barbarian invasions,

the Italian Kingdom of Theodoric the Goth, and the general break-up of the West, Meanwhile, while the *lingua rustica* began to run off into the Romance dialects, the *Lingua Latina* survived indeed, but was cultivated only by the learned, and these were mostly the Fathers and writers of the Latin Church. Ambrose and Jerome in Italy, Augustine and Lactantius, worthy successors of Tertullian and Cyprian in Africa, Prudentius in Spain, the two Hilaries, Sulpicius Severus, Sidonius Apollinaris, and others in Gaul, these were the men who, when the world seemed to be sinking in ruin, preserved and left an impress of their own upon what was to be for all time the official language of the Western Church. If they aimed not primarily at beauty of form, and discarded complexities and involutions, they gained in simplicity and directness, whilst their diction lacked not its own peculiar charm. If they admitted new words, new compounds, and constructions, instead of stagnating in the old Ciceronian rut, they obeyed the laws of every living language, which seeks new expression for new ideas and doctrines. These ideas and doctrines, supernatural and often abstruse, had to be explained to the people and defended against clever objectors. Had it not been for them, and later on for the episcopal and Benedictine schools, to which we owe the preservation of the Latin classics, the revival of learning under Charles the Great would have been impossible, as would that of the twelfth century and the rise of Scholasticism, whose culminating glory was Thomas of Aquin. It was long the fashion to gibe at the Schoolmen as barbarians, yet are they never ungrammatical; the worst of their barbarisms are lifted bodily out of Aristotle's terse and clean-cut Greek, and in his intellectual workshop

they forged an instrument of abstract metaphysical thought that has never been surpassed. 'To the Schoolmen,' wrote Sir William Hamilton, 'the vulgar languages are principally indebted for what precision and analytic subtlety they possess.'[1]

The Liturgical Poetry of St. Thomas belongs to that class of sacred metrical compositions, written to be chanted by the people, partly for their instruction and partly for their devotion, which Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose of Milan were the first to introduce from the East. In the classical iambic dimeter Ambrose found ready at hand a metre well suited for singing, and this, together with the trochaic tetrameter catalectic, a marching measure used by the Roman armies at triumphs, and adopted first by Ambrose's contemporary, the Spaniard Prudentius, have ever been the normal metres of Latin hymnology. Very soon, however, as the quantitative pronunciation of Latin had by the fourth century almost disappeared, the classical scheme of scansion, imported from the Greek and dependent on time only, was abandoned for a new scheme of scansion regulated by accent or recurring beat, though the names of the classical feet and metres were retained. This, we are assured, was but a return to what had been the ruling principle of rhythm among the Celtic races and in Italy, long before 'Father Ennius' borrowed the hexameter from the Greek. Later on, the better to divide verse from verse, as well as to charm the ear, rime was introduced, though this was not perfected until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Its laws, however, were not quite ours, allowing, as they did, of what are called 'caudate' rimes, namely those formed by two final

[1] *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature*, p. 5, n.

unaccented syllables, which form a tail, as it were, to the syllable accented. Thus St. Thomas rimes *cernui* with *ritui*, *gaudia* with *praeconia*, and *vetera* with *opera*, rimes which with us would not be legitimate.

From his early years he must have been familiar with the Ambrosian hymns, which he had heard sung, in accordance with St. Benedict's rule, in the Abbey of Monte Cassino, and these it became part of his own observance to repeat when he entered St. Dominic's new order. At Paris, too, he may well have become acquainted with the hymns of Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours (†1133), of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (†1153), of Bernard of Morlaix (c. 1150), and of Adam of St. Victor (†1177),whom Dom Guéranger calls 'le plus grande poète du moyen age.' Adam's sequences were set to music and used in the worship of his own abbey at Paris, and there St. Thomas may have heard them during the years he spent in Paris before his return to Italy in the year 1260. He certainly shows traces of them in his own hymns. In Italy he lectured not only in Rome but also at Orvieto; and it was in this little rock-built city, then more populous than now, whither Pope Urban IV had retired with his court to escape Manfred and his Saracens, that Thomas received that Pontiff's commission to write the office for the new feast of Corpus Christi. The miraculous event that led to the institution of that feast need not be here rehearsed. We are all familiar with Raphael's fresco in the *stanze* of the Vatican, depicting the miracle of Bolsena, and the same subject may be seen treated by Ugolino del Prete Ilario in the Chapel of the Corporal in the Cathedral of Orvieto. As Archdeacon of Liège, Urban must have known the office used there for the local feast of Corpus

Christi since its institution in the year 1246; but it seems hardly likely that he should have carried this office about with him when made Bishop of Verdun, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and finally Pope. In those days, when dioceses were left largely to themselves to draw up their own ordinals and offices, having St. Thomas at hand, and having commissioned himto write a new office, is it likely that he would have sent to Liège for a copy of the older office, the work of a youthful monk?[1] That would have meant a loss of time, two months at the very least, when all were in a hurry. The miracle happened in December, 1263; the Bull *Transiturus* is dated August 11th, 1264, and Urban's letter to Eva, the Liège recluse, inclosing a copy of St. Thomas' office, is dated September 8th. Despite similarities between the two offices, we are not driven to conclude that St. Thomas owed either much or little to the other office. Even Papebroch changed his opinion on the matter.[2] As for Urban having commissioned St. Bonaventure also to prepare an office, that the latter did so, and tore it up on seeing St. Thomas', we cannot be far wrong if, with the Bollandists and the learned Dominican De Rossi, we reject the account as a fable, of which nothing is heard till late in the sixteenth century.

In the logical order and structure of his hymns St. Thomas is naturally the theologian as well as the poet. Devotion, as he knew and taught, must flow from the contemplation of revealed truth, and hence in all his hymns, after a call to thanksgiving and praise, the institution of the Eucharist is related, however briefly,

[1] *In litterarum scientia imperitum*; *Acta SS.* V. x, p. 459.
[2] *Acta SS.* V. xiii. Diss. 23.

the Church's teaching is clearly defined, and then his heart pours itself out in adoration and love.

The sequence *Lauda Sion* opens with an outburst of praise, which largely borrows its expressions from the Psalms. Yet no praise of ours, we are reminded, can rise to the height of the day's great theme. Past all telling is the glory of the festival that recalls the ritual banquet of our great King, that banquet which fulfilled the figure of the ancient Jewish Pasch, abrogating the old and bringing in the new, replacing shadow with substance, and dispelling darkness with light. And that very same banquet we nowadays renew. For it was Christ's command that what He then did should be done in His Church in memory of Him unto all time. With what boldness and compactness of precise diction is not the belief of the Church then set forth, long before Trent had defined! *Dogma datur Christianis:* you may take it or leave it; and yet to take it involves no big effort on the part of any one who holds that Christ is very God (that is to say, if the Father draw him), and that he can transcend in his works the laws imposed by Himself upon nature. The bread passes into Christ's Flesh, the wine into Christ's Blood. Thus only can the truth of his words be saved, and it is not God's wont to fulfil one type with another more enigmatical. Though reason be stumbled and sense be at a loss, neither the one nor the other is renounced.

Under diverse semblances,
Only signs, not substances,
    Lie priceless things enshrined.
Flesh is eaten, blood is drained,
Yet the whole Christ is contained
    Under either kind.

Nor torn, nor broke, by him that eats,
Divided not, like other meats,
Intact Himself He gives;
One may eat, a thousand may,
That one eats as much as they,
Yet unconsumed He lives.

Life is the portion of them that eat worthily; the wicked eat and drink their own damnation. Then comes what may be an allusion to the miracle of Bolsena. The words, *ne vacilles*, certainly recall the temptation of the German Priest when there celebrating.

Now when the priest the host divides,
Know that beneath each fragment hides
As much as 'neath the whole abides,
And all doubt repress.
The substance is in no wise split,
But the sign containing it;
The cóntent thus becomes no whit
In mode or measure less.

Lo, here is the Bread which Angels eat, and which one day we shall eat with them, when we shall have passed *ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*. Meantime we feed on Him, in Adam of St. Victor's words, *sub umbrâ sacramenti*. Our eyes are held during this our earthly pilgrimage; yet are we the 'children of the Kingdom,' who eat by the right of that Bread, which it were sacrilege to toss to dogs. *Foris canes, . . . et omnis qui amat et facit mendacium*.[1] The chief figures of the Eucharist, with the singular omission of the sacrifice of Melchisedech, due no doubt to the exigencies of rime or metre, are next passed in brief review, and then, giving the rein to his piety, the Saint gives us, in words reminiscent of Scripture, what has ever been regarded

[1] Apoc. xxii. 15.

as the tenderest and sweetest of prayers to Christ in the Sacrament of his love.

Jesu, good Shepherd, our true Bread,
On us all thy pity shed,
Feed us, drive away all dread,
Show us thy good things outspread
In the land where life not faints.
Thou who all things dost upbear,
Here our food, as home we fare,
Bid us to thy table there,
Our friends and co-heirs' bliss to share
In the city of the saints.

The Vesper hymn, *Pange lingua*, is composed of stanzas, consisting each of six verses, whereof the first, third, and fifth are trochaic dimeters, and the second, fourth and sixth are trochaic dimeters catalectic. Each triad of these verses, the even and the odd, has its own rime. In the invitation to praise is to be noted St. Thomas' use of *Rex gentium*, as applied to our Lord, an appellation already used by him in the *invitatorium* at Matins. The whole poem seems to have been inspired by that Leonine couplet, quoted by him in the *Summa*[1] in which Christ is described as presiding, like a King, at the last Supper:

Rex sedet in cenâ turbâ cinctus duodenâ ;
Se tenet in manibus, se cibat ipse cibus.

The phrase *turba duodena*, occurs both here, and in the *Lauda Sion*, and was borrowed also by Adam of St. Victor. From him St. Thomas seems to have taken a loan of the phrases, *Qui procedis ab utroque, Genitore Genitoque*,[2] just as in the *Lauda Sion* he had borrowed from him *Vetustatem novitas, Umbram fugat veritas*.[3]

[1] III. 81. 1. [2] Second Hymn for Pentecost.
[3] First Hymn for Easter.

It is a notable hymn, which Palestrina nobly wedded to his immortal music. Of its six stanzas the fourth, rich in alliteration, is undoubtedly the finest, and takes our thoughts back once more to Orvieto and the Holy Corporal.

> The Word made Flesh, from very bread
> His Flesh makes by his word,
> And wine becomes the Blood of Christ—
> Unseen, indeed, unheard;
> Yet faith holds fast the simple heart
> To what Truth once averred.

The stanza used in the hymn for Matins, *Sacris solemniis*, were best described as one consisting of seven short lines, each of which, the last excepted, is made up of two dactyls, whilst in the last line two dactyls are preceded by a spondee. The first line rimes with the third, the second with the fourth and sixth, and the fifth with the seventh, a somewhat intricate scheme, but not so intricate as some of those of Adam of St. Victor. We have the same invitation to joy and praise, and the same brief rehearsal of the Last Supper, in which the 'typical lamb,' just eaten, is 'fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.' The accidental effects of reception under both kinds are glanced at. The Apostles were weak, and Christ gave them his Body; sadness had filled their hearts, and He gave them his Blood, the fruit of the true Vine, the wine which 'gladdeneth the heart of man.' Thus did He inaugurate the supreme act of worship of the New Covenant, an act which could be repeated, in which all could join at all times and in all places, unlike the tragic offering of the next day, which, though all-sufficing for sin, and in its efficacy ever abiding, was but a transient act, that could not be repeated,

nor established as an object of permanent cult, in which He in his loneliness was the sole offerer, and was, as Cardinal Hosius observed, 'a priest rather according to the order of Aaron than that of Melchisedech.[1] It is to be noted that here alone, and in no other of his hymns, does St. Thomas use the word *sacrificium*, though in his antiphons he extols the priesthood of Christ according to the order of Melchisedech, and uses the word *sacrificare*, when referring to the rite of the Mass. For him the Mass is the *sacrificium istud;* hence that of Calvary must be the *sacrificium illud;* both agreeing in the identity of victim and chief offerer, differing in the mode of offering or sacrificial acts, since in the Mass Christ, immortal and impassible, is offered through the agency of his ministers and under semblances not his own, yet which make Him actually present to us (for such is the meaning of the Latin word *repraesentare*) under the likeness and imagery of death. The Mass was indeed instituted by Him as a memorial of his sacrifice on Calvary, and hence is sometimes called a relative sacrifice. But it is, first of all, an absolute sacrifice in itself, apart from any relation.[2] The gem of the hymn is the sixth stanza, which inspired again the polyphonic strains of Palestrina.

The bread of Angels is the bread of man;
The bread from heaven an end to figures brings;
Oh thing of wonder, that a mortal can,
Poor, needy slave, feed on the Lord of things!

The hymn for Lauds, *Verbum Supernum*, is in stanzas of four iambic dimeters with alternate verses riming. By many it is considered to be the most felicitous of

[1] *Confutatio Brentii* I. cap. 41.
[2] Cf. Card. Billot, *De Sacramentis*, Thesis 54.

St. Thomas' hymns. The Last Supper finds its accustomed place, and its mention is remarkable for the play upon the word *tradere*. Before permitting Himself to be *surrendered* by a disciple to the thongs of his enemies, He who was Omnipotence first put Himself in bonds by *surrendering* Himself to his disciples and to us in the food of life. Something very like to this play upon the word *tradere* St. Thomas found ready to hand in the Canon of the Mass for Maundy Thursday, whether intended there or not. The twofold species under which Christ gives Himself to us are detailed, and the reason of the double gift is added:

> He gave them under symbols twain
> His body and his blood,
> Man's twofold nature to sustain,
> And be the whole man's food.

These words were written when Communion under both species had not wholly died out in the West and long before the Hussite heresy appeared. Elsewhere St. Thomas, quoting St. Ambrose, says that 'the body of Christ is given under the species of bread for the health of the body, and the blood under the species of wine for the health of the soul,'[1] in which latter the soul was once believed to reside. But he is evidently speaking of the accidental effects of the Sacrament, since he also justifies reception under one kind only.[2] And here we may note with Bellarmine that whensoever the Fathers seem to attribute a peculiar effect to the species of wine, it is not to that species itself that the effect is attributed, but to the Blood which that species contains, which Blood is equally contained under either kind.[3] The

[1] *S.* III. 84. 1. [2] *S.* III. 80. 12. [3] *De Euch.* IV. 23.

happiest stanza is that which with such terse and touching precision sets forth the benefits of redemption.

> At birth He shared our brotherhood;
> At table He became our food;
> Our ransom hanging on the tree;
> Reigning our guerdon He will be.

This is the stanza which excited the despairing admiration of that clever Latinist of the French renaissance, Santeuil (1630-97), whose own hymns for Corpus Christi, written according to the rules of prosody and in a classical metre, are still read with delight by the scholar. The question that will, however, recur here to readers of the *Revue Bénédictine*, is that raised in the April number of 1910 by Dom Morin; namely, was St. Thomas the author of this particular hymn, even granting that the rest of the office is his? The learned writer inclines to the view that this hymn, as we have it, is but St Thomas' abridged and improved edition of an older hymn that long retained a place in the Cistercian breviary. His reasons for adopting this view seem cogent enough, if only one thing could be proven, namely that St. Thomas had before him at Orvieto the hymn used in his day at St. Martin's in Liège.

The mention of Santeuil compels us to cast if but one glance at that earlier and brighter star of the renaissance, Jerome Vida (1490-1566), Bishop of Alba, and one of the Fathers of Trent, himself a devout client of St. Thomas, to whom he dedicated one of his beautiful hymns. That to the Eucharist, consisting of three hundred and seven hexameters, is in language and style just the poem which, due allowance made, Virgil himself might have written, had St. Paul found him alive, instead of in his tomb at Posilipo, and made of him a Christian. But

in spite of his copious and noble diction and faultless versification and the majestic roll of his rhythm, which are of a higher order, and appeal more to the intellect than does the sing-song of beat and rime, the heart is not stirred so readily or so deeply by Vida's harmonious cadences, as it is by the simpler, tenderer, and more piercing melody of St. Thomas. With Vida we are not so much in church as on Parnassus, yet not through Vida's fault, but because when we read him, we who have been brought up to use naught but Church Latin in our prayers, and are not wont to measure our feet by quantity, find ourselves thrust back, as to us it seems, into an age and culture which long since passed away. Not so when we pray with St. Thomas. The medium he uses has ever been the Church's own, the language which her Fathers plucked from the ruins of a crumbling world, and largely moulded afresh. Fostered by her, it has never died. She, at her centre, pronounces it not as Augustus, but as Gregory did. Since the thirteenth century the jubilant notes of the *Lauda Sion* have echoed beneath the vaults of all the great cathedrals and hoary abbeys of the West, and were heard for long in the streets of every city and town and village of Catholic Europe. Since the Church approved of that most popular devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the service of Benediction, one at least of St. Thomas' hymns has ever had there its appointed place. And in the silence of private prayer before the altar, what words rise so spontaneously to the faithful heart as those of the hymn *Adoro te*, which bids sense stand aside, and tramples upon all the cavilling of heretics, past, present, and to come, with that all-subduing, triumphant act of faith:

Credo quidquid dixit Dei Filius.

Not by the Church only has St. Thomas been proclaimed to be the poet of the Eucharist, but, as we may piously believe, by One higher still. The words, 'Thou hast written well of me, Thomas,' may have been spoken to him more than once; but as he heard them spoken at Orvieto, where he had composed his hymns, they sounded thus, 'Thou hast written well of me, Thomas, *in my Sacrament*'. And the crucifix, whence that voice came, is still venerated there in the church of San Domenico.

X.—XIII.

APPENDICES A.—D.

X.

APPENDIX A.

The Papal Letter of Commendation, upon the Occasion of the Presentation of the Three Preceding Summer School Books.

Segretaria di Stato, di Sua Santità.

Dal Vaticano, 31 *Marzo*, 1924.

Revmo Padre,

Tanto più graditi son tornati alla Santità Sua i tre volumi che la P. V. Revma ha recentemente umiliato ai Suoi piedi, in quanto da essi più chiaramente si rivelano i buoni frutti delle benemerite 'Summer Schools of Catholic Studies in Cambridge.'

Lieto di veder esposte e illustrate da persone così competenti dell' uno e dell' altro Clero le Verità della Fede, e felicitandosi della salutare attività che si spiega in questo campo nella celebre Università di Cambridge, a cui Lo richiamano cosi grati ricordi di studio, il Santo Padre augura di cuore all' utilissima iniziativa sempre più copiosi frutti e manda con paterno affetto a tutti gli organizzatori di questi convegni, anzitutto alla P. V., l' Apostolica Benedizione.

Lieto io stesso dell' augusto messaggio, mi valgo volentieri dell' incontro per professarmi con sensi di distinta e sincera stima

di V. P. Revma

affmo nel Signore,

P. C. GASPARRI.

Rev. Fr. C. Lattey, S.J.,
St. Beuno's College,
St. Asaph, N. Wales.

[Translation]

Secretariate of State,
of His Holiness.

The Vatican,
March 31, 1924.

Reverend Father,

The three volumes which your Reverence recently laid humbly at His Holiness' feet were all the more acceptable to him, because from them clearly appear the good fruits of the well-deserving 'Summer Schools of Catholic Studies in Cambridge.'

Glad as he is to see the truths of the Faith explained and illustrated by such competent lecturers from the secular and regular clergy, and delighted with the salutary activity developed in this field at the famous University of Cambridge, which recalls to him such pleasant recollections of former study, the Holy Father heartily wishes this very useful enterprise ever more abundant fruits, and imparts with paternal affection to all the organizers of these gatherings, and especially to your Reverence, the Apostolic Benediction.

Glad myself to convey this august message, I willingly take the opportunity to declare myself, with sentiments of distinguished and sincere esteem,

Your Reverence's very devotedly in the Lord,

P. CARDINAL GASPARRI.

Rev. Fr. C. Lattey, S.J.,
St. Beuno's College,
St. Asaph, N. Wales.

XI.

APPENDIX B.

The Chronology of St. Thomas.

By the Very Rev. Bede Jarrett, O.P., S.T.L., M.A.

1224–5: St. Thomas Aquinas born at Rocca Secca, near Aquino, Naples.

1230: St. Thomas goes to Monte Cassino Abbey as oblate.

1239, autumn: Sent to Naples University.

1244, end of April: Receives Dominican habit in Priory at Naples. May: On way to Paris from Rome, captured by his brothers and imprisoned in Rocca Secca Castle.

1245, autumn: Set free, goes to Paris, studies under Albert the Great.

1248, summer: Goes with Albert to Cologne; first stone of Cathedral laid.

1252, summer: Moved to Paris as Bachelor under Albert by the Master General, Humbert de Romans, at the instigation of Cardinal Hugh of S. Cher.

1256, spring: Master of Theology in Paris. September: Teaches as Master of Schools in Paris.

1258–1264 (about): Composes *Contra Gentiles*.

1259: Attends General Chapter of his Order at Valenciennes. Sent to Anagni to teach at Papal Court.

1263: Composes *Contra Errores Graecorum* at request of Pope Urban IV.

1263: General Chapter of Order held in London; St. Thomas due to attend as deffinitor of the Roman Province, but no proof of his having done so.

1264. Composes Office and Mass of Corpus Christi.

1264 (about): Composes Commentaries on Aristotle. Orvieto, Perugia.

1265: Viterbo.

1267: St. Thomas present at General Chapter in Bologna (Whit Sunday, June 5), witnessing translation of relics of St. Dominic. Recalled to Viterbo.

1268, November: Sent to Paris to teach. *Summa Theologica* begun.

1269, January: Arrives in Paris.

1272: After Easter St. Thomas leaves Paris: on Whit Sunday, present at General Chapter of Florence. October 15: St. Thomas preaching in Naples.

1273, December 6: Vision after which St. Thomas does not write again.

1274, January: Leaves Naples, summoned to General Council of Lyons. March 7: Dies in Cistercian Abbey of Fossanova.

1323, July 18: Canonized at Avignon.

AUTHORITIES:

P. Mandonnet, O. P.: *Chronologie sommaire de la vie et des écrits de S. Thomas.* (*Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 1920, pp. 142–152.)

Mgr. Grabmann: *Die echten Schriften des hl. Thomas von Aquin.* (*Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, XXII. 1–2; Münster, 1920.)

F. Pelster, S.J.: *Kritische Studien zum Leben und zu den Schriften Alberts des Grossen.* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1920, pp. 62–84.)

XII.

APPENDIX C.

Conspectus of the Summa Theologica.

By the Rt. Rev. H. L. Janssens, O.S.B.,
Titular Bishop of Bethsaida.

[The numbers refer to the *quaestiones* or 'questions.']

Part I. Of God.

1. Introduction.
2–26. Of God as One.
27–43. Of the Holy Trinity.
44–119. Of God as Creator:
- 44–49. The production of creatures.
- 50–102. The diversity of creatures:
  - 50–64. The angels.
  - 65–74. The work of the six days.
  - 75–102. Man (nature and production of).
- 103–119. God's preservation of creatures and providence.

Part II. Of Man as tending to God.

First Part (*Prima Secundae*). Of human acts in general.

1–5. The end of man.
6–21. Human acts.
22–48. Human passions.
49–54. Human habits.
55–89. Virtues and vices in general.
90–108. Laws, human and divine.
109–114. Grace.

Second Part (*Secunda Secundae*). Of human acts in detail.

1–46. The theological virtues (faith, hope and charity).
47–170. The cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance).
171–189. States of life (special gifts, active and contemplative life, religious state).

PART III. OF CHRIST.

1–26. Christology (Christ's Person).
27–59. Soteriology (Christ's Life and Work).
60–90. The Sacraments (in general, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance).
N.B.—St. Thomas left the treatise on Penance incomplete.

Supplement (concluding Part III):
1–68. The Sacraments (concluded).
69–99. The Last Things.

XIII.

APPENDIX D.

Works Recommended.

1. The 'Leonine Edition' of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, edited by the Pontifical College of Editors. (Rome: in progress.)
2. The *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas, in English. Edited by the Dominican Fathers. 21 Vols. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne.)
3. The *Summa contra Gentiles*, in English. Edited by the Dominican Fathers. 4 Vols. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne: in progress.)
4. *Summa Theologica, ad modum commentarii in Aquinatis Summam praesentis aevi studiis aptatam.* By the Rt. Rev. H. L. Janssens, O.S.B., Titular Bishop of Bethsaida. 10 Vols. (Herder: in progress.)
5. *The Philosophy of St. Thomas*, by Etienne Gilson. Translated from the French by Edward Bullough, Esq., M.A., Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. Edited by the Rev. Aidan Elrington, O.P., D.Sc., F.L.S. (Heffer, Cambridge.)
6. *The Catechism of the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas.* By the Rev. Thomas Pègues, O.P. English translation, edited by the Rev. Aelred Whitacre, O.P. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne.)
7. *Einführung in die Summa Theologica des hl. Thomas von Aquin.* By Mgr. Prof. Martin Grabmann. (Herder.)
8. *Introduction à la Somme Théologique de S. Thomas d'Aquin.* Par Mgr. Legendre. (Paris: Bloud et Gay.)
9. *S. Thomas d'Aquin.* Par le R. P. Sertillanges, O.P. (Paris: Alcan.)
10. *Bibliographie Thomiste.* Par P. Mandonnet, O.P., et J. Destrez, O.P. (*Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques.*)
11. *Acta Hebdomadae Thomisticae.* (Rome.)

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